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Watt - Town and Trail. 1908.

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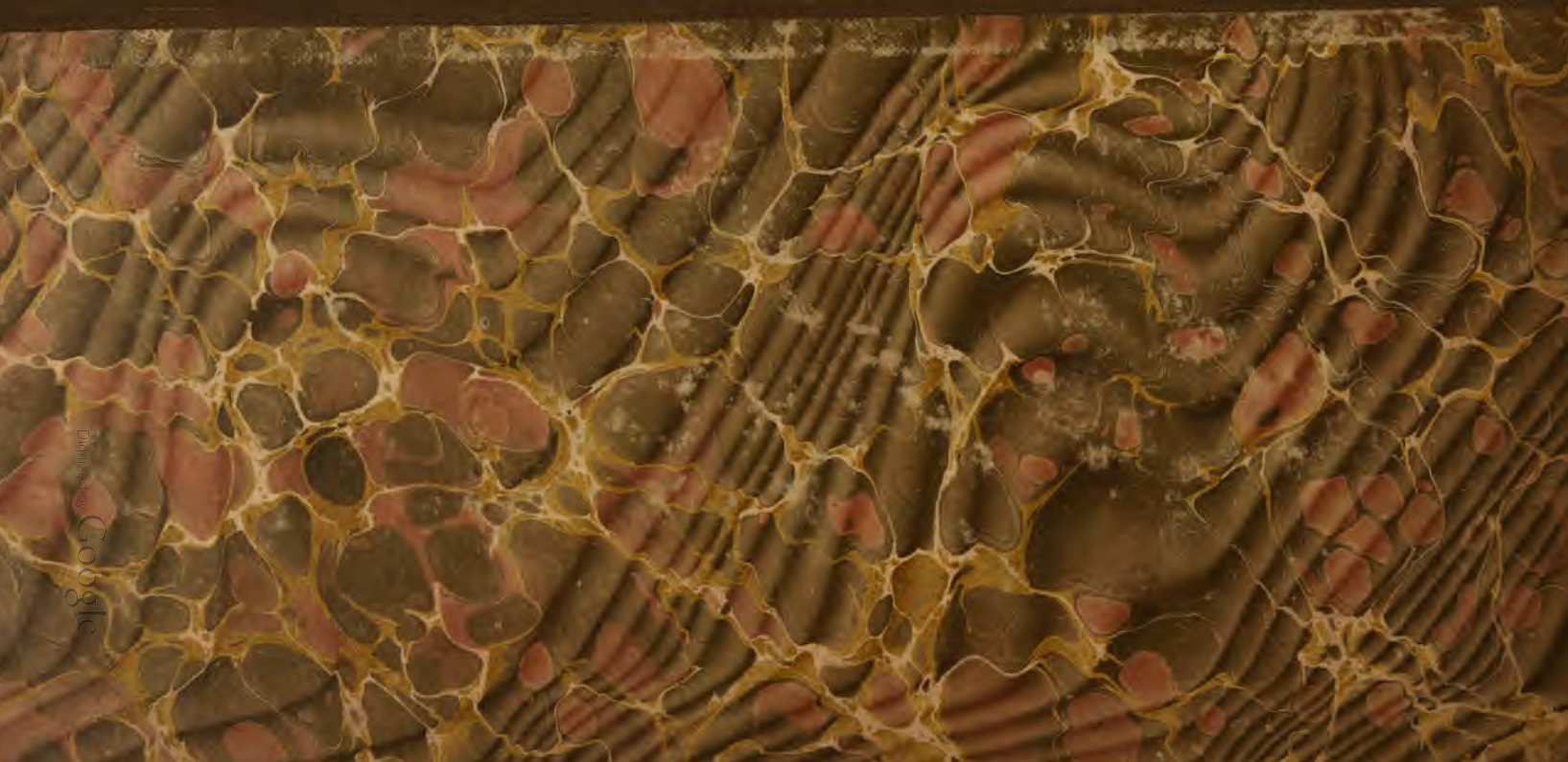

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FROM THE
FRANCIS PARKMAN
MEMORIAL FUND
FOR
CANADIAN HISTORY
ESTABLISHED IN 1908

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TOWN AND TRAIL

By Herbert H. Balmer Watt.

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TOWN AND TRAIL

By Gertrude Balmer Watt

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
THE NEWS PUBLISHING COMPANY
1908

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Preface

HE present volume is issued as a result of a successful experiment of a year ago. At that time, in response to the representations of numerous readers of the Edmonton Saturday News, to which she had for a considerable period been a staff contributor, the writer published a booklet, entitled "A Woman in the West," containing a number of her sketches of Western Canadian life. It was thought, by those responsible for the undertaking, that a useful public purpose would be served in giving a glimpse of life in this part of the Dominion, as viewed by a woman. Certain it is that widespread interest was evoked. From newspapers, reviews and magazines over two continents came most flattering notices, which served to indicate that the little volume fulfilled its mission. It is because of the reception accorded "A Woman in the West" that "Town and Trail" is now presented to the public. Most of the matter which it contains has already appeared in the columns of The Saturday News and The Alberta Homestead. While the principal object of the publication is, as with the last venture, to give its readers a better appreciation of life in Alberta, in the capital city of which it is issued, a few other sketches are introduced, which have no particular reference to the province. This is merely by way of variety. Typographically, this year's offering is a trifle more ambitious than its predecessor, while in deference to those whose kindly criticism of "A Woman in the West" was that there was not enough of it, more matter has been included. It is launched with the fervent hope that it may help in giving the world at large some idea of the charm of life in Alberta, of the spirit which animates our citizens and of the opportunities which this wonderful province, so dear to the hearts of its sons and daughters, has to offer to the right kind of men and women.

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Morning in the West

(By Arthur J. Stringer).

Gray countries and grim empires pass away
And all the pomp and glory of citied towers
Goes down to dust; and youth itself shall age.
But, oh! the splendor of this autumn dawn,
This passes not away! This dew-drenched range,
This infinite great width of open space
This cool, keen wind that blows like God's own breath
On life's once drowsy coal, and thrills the blood;
This brooding sea of sun-washed solitude,
This virginal vast dome of open air—
These, these endure, and greater are than grief!
Still there is strength; and life, oh, life is good!
Still the horizon calls, the morrow lures;
Still hearts adventurous seek the outward trails;
Still, still life holds its hope!
For here is air and God's good greenness spread!
Here youth audacious fronts the coming day!
Here are no huddled cities old in sin,
Where teem reptilious mirth and golden ease
And age on youth so mountainously lies!
Here life takes on a glory and a strength
Of things still primal, and goes plunging on
And what care we for time—encrusted tombs
What care we here for all the ceaseless drip
Of tears in countries old in tragedy?
What care we here for all earth's creeds out-worn,
The dreams out-lived, the hopes to ashes turned,
In that old East, so dark with rain and doubt?
Here life swings glad and free and rude, and youth
Shall drink it to the full, and go content!

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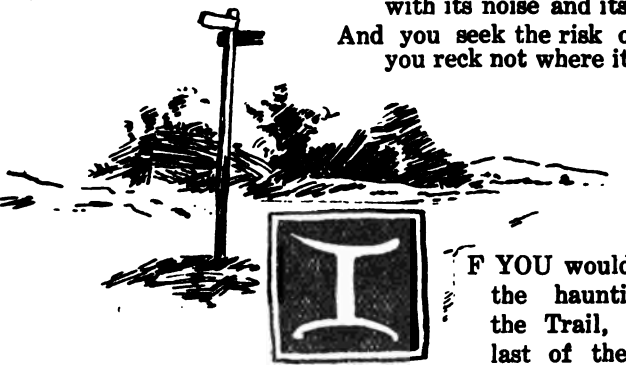
The Lure of the Trail

The trails of the world be countless, and most of the trails be tried;
You tread on the heels of the many, till you come where the ways divide;
And one lies safe in the sunlight, and the other is dreary and wan,
Yet you look aslant at the Lone Trail, and the Lone Trail lures you on,
And somehow you're sick of the highway, with its noise and its easy needs,
And you seek the risk of the by-way, and you reck not where it leads.

—R. W. Service



IF YOU would understand aright the haunting attraction of the Trail, so typical of "the last of the lands," the great North and West, the strange lure that is drawing the best young blood from so many of the older lands to-day, you should come West yourself and experience some of the fascinations of it. If you would learn something of the quality of spirit that animates Westerners to a man, you should rub shoulders with them on their own camping ground, do a circus with them, ride on one of their new roads, knock around with them in the lobby of an hotel, or swap yarns while "doing" the main

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street of some two by four town. You could find it quite as readily over the counter of a little prairie general store, or away up among the silences of the mountains. It is a general atmosphere rather than a place or a thing, and hard times, and even exploded booms, have little or no effect on it.

At the back of the atmosphere lies the lure of the Trail, the call of the wild, the magnetism of the strange and new. It is the same mysterious spirit that leads men to the Indian frontier to spend some of the best years of their lives, that led Wolfe on to capture Quebec, Livingstone to penetrate darkest Africa, G. W. Steevens to his death in Ladysmith.

Sometimes in the dark moments you ask yourself why should the trail be broken at all? Why is it so imperative that homes all over the face of the earth should be disorganized, that this new and practically unsettled country should be made to blossom like the rose. I think there are two answers: nations, as well as men can not shrink from their destiny, and what should we do with the men who won't fit in, if there were no new worlds to conquer?

I recall in this connection an answer made by young Mikklesen, the explorer, to the question why he should venture life and limb in his explorations for the new continent he believes exists somewhere in the Arctic circle, when he might be enjoying a happy, comfortable existence among his own people.

What was the use anyway?

"The use? Why think what a fine base from which to make a dash for the Pole."

And while we query: "Why not sit down and enjoy a civilized existence in the midst of plenty? Why should men go out on to lonely homesteads, into the wild north country where comfort as we know it is not?"—we have already our answer: "Because we have taken up this work, we cannot drop it now, and what is more we would not drop it if we could."

A year and more ago a young English ornithologist prepared an expedition to go north to study bird life.

Boats were built and sent on to Athabasca Landing; over

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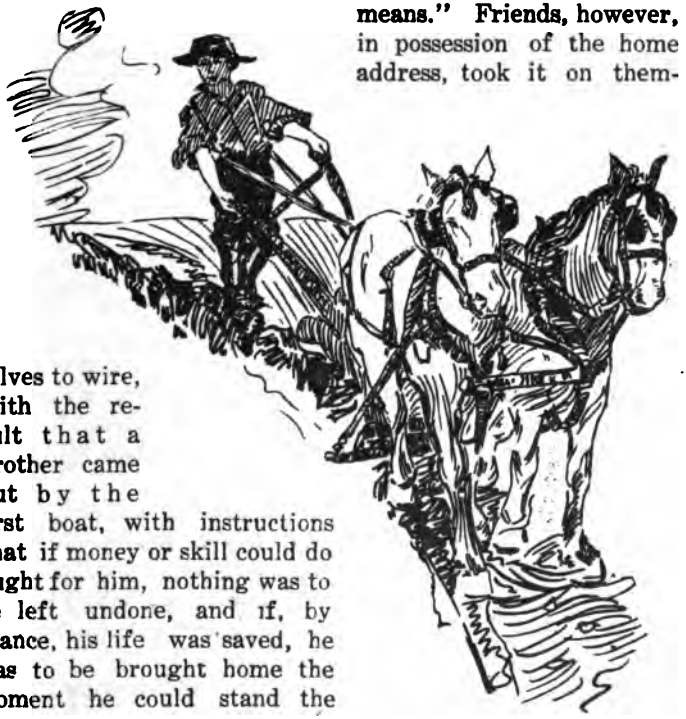
five thousand dollars was invested in articles for barter and general supplies, when just three days prior to his intended departure he was stricken with typhoid and taken to the hospital where for weeks his life was despaired of. Queried as to whether he would not like a cable sent to his people as there seemed no hope of recovery, he replied "not by any means." Friends, however, in possession of the home address, took it on themselves to wire, with the result that a brother came out by the first boat, with instructions that if money or skill could do aught for him, nothing was to be left undone, and if, by chance, his life was saved, he was to be brought home the moment he could stand the journey.



"So States are formed on men like these,
And Empires builded on their toil."

He did get better; they're hard to kill these clean-living, clear-headed Britishers, old and young, and he did go home—but only for two months.

Now he is back studying his birds.

Why? Again, what's the use?

Because perhaps he didn't take naturally to golf, and

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muffin-struggles and kow-towing and such-like ways of his people.

Because there was with him the memory of a long line of his race who had "done" things, not babbled of them, because the "wanderlust" that has made old England's greatness was part of his very being. Service has voiced the idea splendidly in the "Spell of the Yukon."

"There's a race of men that don't fit in
A race that can't stay still;
So they break the hearts of kith and kin,
And they roam the world at will.

They range the field and they rove the flood,
And they climb the mountain's crest;
Theirs is the curse of the gypsy blood,
And they don't know how to rest.

If they just went straight they might go far;
They are strong and brave and true;
But they're always tired of the things that are,
And they want the strange and new.

They want, too, I think I should add, to count for something in this world, to help make history, not just live in it. The lure of the trail has taken men captive from the beginning, and to the end of time those worth while will push on to the lands where a man has elbow room.

In a brilliant novel by A. E. W. Mason, entitled "The Broken Road," which by the way has reference to the building of the road on the Indian frontier through the Khyber Pass, there is a significant paragraph which voices admirably what I would say with regard to many of the men who are today making the West.

"Many men," says Mason, "will die in the building of the road from cold and dysentery, and even hunger—Englishmen and coolies from Baltistan. Many men will die fighting over it, Englishmen and Chiltis, and Ghurkas and Sikhs. It will cost millions of money, and from policy or economy, successive Governments will try to stop it; but the Power of the Road will be greater than the Power of any Government. It will wind through valleys so deep that the day's sunshine is gone within the hour. It will be carried in galleries along

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the faces of mountains, and for eight months of the year sections of it will be buried deep in snow. Yet it will be finished."

And so will the trail be broken in the North and West. Perhaps in the doing of it many poor chaps will go under. Even so,

"Gone under?" if you like! As trees
Stand firm on roots that grip the soil.
So States are formed on men like these
And Empires builded on their toil—
"Gone under" that foundations may
Hold showier structures up to-day.

So myriad patient corals spend
Their lives, and grave is heaped on grave
Below the sea, but in the end
The island's there, and palm trees wave
Round the lagoon, a sacred wreath.
That crowns the dead who rest beneath

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Street Scenes

THE STREET scenes of Edmonton and other Western towns may lack to the globe-trotter much of the picturesqueness of many continental cities, but to those who have the "seeing eyes" they contain a fascination, not to be outdone by even the heterogeneous life of those of Sunny Italy. I know it is the customary twaddle to speak of a man as "typically Western" who masquerades around in riding breeches, a Stetson hat, and who breathes strange oaths and much braggadocia, but this is no more a picture of the average young Westerner than the widely-circulated post cards of special-occasion-Indian-parades, are typical street scenes of every-day, common ordinary towns in the West.

We are not one eternal circus-show forever doing a turn to the gods, but we are a great reservoir of human possibilities, and the manner and disposal of the contents of the reservoir must be, to even the oldest timer, a source of never-ending interest.

Were I asked to describe what is typically Western both as applied to men and towns I should reply that the question was too big a proposition for me. And then some goat would give a chuckle of delight and say:—"What a charming Western expression!"

"Proposition! I hear it on every hand."

"Now to-day a man told me he had a fine proposition to lay before me, something in the way of a sub-division, I gather, and yesterday the same fellow remarked that Mr. Blank was a pretty tough proposition.

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"'I make the proposition that we all go to——'s for lunch,' says another. You are too funny.

"And then your expression "round-up"—I am quite in love with; really I shall have to take it home with me."

Thus it happens that with his Indian trophies, which never saw an Indian, his souvenir cups manufactured in probably his own home town, his colored post cards and other reminders of his trip to "the Back of Beyond" and the other end of "Nowhere," he slips in last of all on a little piece of paper this note: Make use of picturesque Western words, "round-up" and "proposition." Wonderfully effective.

Arrived home, he describes our wicked little champagne suppers, draws a long bow of the discomforts he has endured, our primitive commerce, the wild character of our cow-boys, and certain paralyzing nights-out with gay young blades, nights, which originated for the most part in his own fertile imagination, and so we are tarred and feathered and ticketed and catalogued as a "pretty sporty bunch."

And yet the West is not synonomous with license, or intoxication, or immorality; we are not ostentatious. We would sooner drop into a supper, off the bat, as it were, than to a Lucullan feast ordered days ahead. It is simply the natural, spontaneous, hearty cohesion of congenial spirits that makes for the charm of Western life, the mingling of many nations and their mode of existence, and the consequent ordering of things to meet the needs, that resolves into the quaint life of the streets whose charm I have made reference to.

There are as many grades and shades of things typically Western as there are colors in the spectrum.

There is the phase of life reflected in the innumerable real estate signs. In good times to stand around the entrance to one of these offices would leave you breathless in five minutes. The atmosphere is feverish. Buyers and sellers seem alike to have taken leave of their senses, and strangers absorb the same tendency in less than no time. A quiet looking immigrant taking a look about him brushes shoulders with a big promoter in dropping in to gain information

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with regard to certain "greatest buys that ever happened," advertised without doors. The office is full of maps and plastered with quarter section farm lands for sale, and sub-divisions to be acquired on easy terms. In less time than it takes to tell it, both are hustled into rigs or motors, off they whizz and the crowd comes on.

It is a dizziness, a distraction, a madness if you will, but—the game proceeds merrily. To the onlooker who has all the fun of the thing, the amazing paradox of birds of prey such as stuffed eagles and lynx and other wild cats—being used as decorations in the windows, appeals as irresistibly funny, but for the most part they are unnoticed. Truly, as our German friends have it, "it is to laugh."

At the corner of Sixth Street and Victoria Avenue where the Land Office is situated, you might spend a month of Sundays quietly studying the crowd who enter, and then and only then, would you gain a little insight into the character of the people who are populating this last great West. Every sort and shape and size are here, have been here waiting, since earliest morning.

But public business never hurries itself, and it is ten o'clock before the doors swing to, and the crowd who have been waiting patiently scatter to make their various applications. In the meantime you have had your glimpse of a typical Western scene.

Sturdy young Britishers, rich in brawn and determination,

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but empty about the pockets. Sharp-eyed Yankees, well up in the line of waiters—quick to seize every advantage. Stolid Galicians in ill-fitting togs, accompanied very often by their great strapping wives, variegated shawls over their heads and a man's coat about their shoulders. Over all is a hush of expectancy, broken only by short, subdued conversations, held in an undertone. It reminds you of the dramatic moment before the curtain rises on some great play, or convocation day at a school, just prior to the awarding of the prizes.

If the real estate offices stand as an example of a Western crowd, fevered and reckless, the Land Office is a type of the deadly earnest settler, who after all, is to be the making of this country. Said Edward Gibbon Wakefield: "Great things are begun by men with great souls and little breeches pockets, and ended by men with great breeches pockets and little souls."

One hopes the last is not always true, and that these great men with the little breeches pockets, who are fighting and working for it, may become the men who will control the country and have the big bank accounts to boot—but who, best of all, will retain their great souls into the bargain. As I pass the waiting wagons, laden high with their household possessions, I breathe a prayer that it may be so.

Nor need it surprise you that quaint stories leak out from these staid official quarters once in a while, as when a man enquired "Are you the land man?" and being told yes, proceeded, "Well, I don't know if you're the person to see or not; but I'll tell you what I want, I'd like to take out civilization papers and become a British object."

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While I have read somewhere, that one of the common sights of Edmonton is to see a man step out of a shack to enter his five thousand dollar auto, I have never actually seen the spectacle myself. However striking the picture then, I would hardly catalogue it as a sight peculiar to the town. What appeals to one as sufficiently bizarre is to run across an occasional Red River cart jostled by an up-to-date motor, the every-day prairie schooner—drawn by its team of stolid oxen, touching wheels with the smart traps of professional men.

Another contrast that must strike the stranger in our midst are the huge office blocks with a lean-to, or hole-in-the-wall often on either side of them. Perhaps more than any thing else, this picture of "past and future" brings home to one the interest of the present. Outside of the smaller and older shops the Indians still congregate or sit squatted on the pavement, but through the plate glass doors stalks their white brother; each man for himself and according to his needs as it were, but will the devil claim the hindermost?

In every neighborhood, however tattered or fashionable, you will come upon tents, either in little colonies or tucked back among the slim poplars, and they too are typical, both of Western towns and Western spirit. If it is impossible to rent, or afford to rent, a suitable house, a tent-home solves the difficulty. They stand a monument to how the people at the other end of "Nowhere" can make the best-of-a-thing, and a glance inside would early convince you, how comfortable ingenious occupants can make them.

We have now reached the stage too of street preachers — they come in black and white, bound in the same strident voices and earnest faces we were wont to associate with the heaven-ordained ones in the parks at home.

Ten feet away one of the many theatres may have a gramaphone going at top pitch, but we have crowds enough for both, happy, peaceable crowds, who don't interrupt once in a lifetime.

Over on the river embankment, from the time that Spring dawns in the land until late November, you may find our few

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lazy men, and other unfortunates out of work. There too, sometimes consort the men who are waiting for something to turn up, and to this spot flock curious sightseers to view the workings of the large lift, that carries alike bus loads of passengers and the heavy coal wagons that used to have to creep up the face of the steep hill.

Some of the shops are very funny. In one called the "U and I," is a window full of pies and cakes with such labels as "the kind that Mother used to try to make," etc., "The Golden Rule Store," and "Store of Plenty" speak for themselves. On a photograph bill-board is: "Pictures taken in a minuet," while the smaller shops in the foreign quarters afford a never-failing panorama of strange sights and tableaux.

Nor is it possible to picture the streets of Edmonton without mentioning the frequent house-moving operations that are carried on right down the centre of the principal thoroughfares. As yet we are all unsettled, Jones buys a lot to-day and builds; to-morrow it has grown too valuable for mere house property, the purchasers are undesirous of retaining the modest home, and in a trice it is travelling down the street with Mrs. Jones engaged in cooking the family dinner.

A cowboy leading a string of mischievous western ponies; a mounted policeman dashing by on his well-groomed steed; a horse or cattle sale on the market; Galician girls in gaudy shawls, any or all of these, are silhouettes of what is moving in the streets to-day. As yet we are in a formative stage, vacillating between the motor and the ox-cart, to-morrow the holes-in-the-wall, the lean-to's, and ox-carts will have passed away, but in the meantime we enjoy their novelty.

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"Do You Remember?"

That night we heard Parepa sing—
  DO YOU REMEMBER, dear?
What, love, so long ago? To me
  It seems but scarce a year.
But oh that night our hearts were light
  And joy was in its spring;
For we had learned to love, that night
    We heard Parepa sing.

. . . . . .

Mute, mute, long mute that glorious voice.
  But, walking home to-night
I passed an open window, all
  The room within was light.
Deep chords were softly touched; and then
  I heard a young voice ring
Clear, passion-thrilled. It was that song
    We heard Parepa sing.

Rapt on the crowded walk I stood,
  I could not tear away.
You smile! A love song—what to me,
  A man whose hair is gray?
Ah, gray indeed! But, Dorothy,
  My thoughts had taken wing.
Again, a boy, I held your hand,
    And heard Parepa sing.

—William T. Smith.

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"Do You Remember?"

I WAS having dinner with eight men recently (shockingly Western isn't it and I the only woman!) three Mormon farmers from Cardston, the President and secretary of the Alberta Farmers' Association, the editor of the Alberta Homestead and two others who shall be nameless, and we were having the most interesting kind of a talk (my hat off to the man who can do it well, and these men could) when all of a sudden!—sounds as if a huge bear or something broke in the door, doesn't it, and if I "writ" it so they'd believe it every word of it back east, or home in England—one of the men from Cardston, and I'm not above telling you it was that cheery prince of good fellows, Mr. Woolford, mentioned something about having received a letter from his brother in the old country, who lived at a place called Headcorn, being very well satisfied with farming these times.

At the mention of Headcorn one of the men across the table, whom we shall christen the Nameless One gave a great start

"Headcorn!" said he, "I should think he would be satisfied."

"What! do YOU know Headcorn?" from Mr. Woolford, the while the wistful reminiscent look crept into his eyes that I have come to know through seeing in the eyes of men North-mad, or in those of Old Timers when they discover another man who has footed it across prairie, and knew and loved the "glorified trading post" of other days.

"Do I know Headcorn?" repeated the Nameless One.

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"Do I know the loveliest spot in all of lovely Kent, its orchards, its hopfields? Well, rather."

And then, because some of the rest of us began to look lonely, because we didn't know and couldn't remember, the conversation dropped, but I noticed that the two men gazed across at each other hungry-like, though the assiduous waiter saw to it that they weren't lacking anything, and turkey's mighty good eating, and no one with any in his immediate vicinity should have any cause for complaint.

Bye and bye we came to discussing wild flowers, when Mr. Woolford remarked that the finest wild flowers he had ever seen grew in Savernake Forest.

"That's so!" interjected the Nameless One. "You'll not be forgetting the wonderful rhododendrons."

Mr. W.: "And so you know Savernake also? Um-m-m, well say if this isn't as good as a trip back home."

Nameless One: "Why, certainly, I lived in that neighborhood for over three years at Marlborough."

Mr. W.: "Did you"—with the most satisfied sigh of absolute contentment—"well, I was farming close there myself."

The thing was inevitable. You could no more have stopped those two from "reminiscing" now (Western phrase, please, and a jolly good one if you're asking me) than you could stop the rays of Alberta sunshine from being the warmest, brightest, most beneficient rays in all the world.

And so you will not wonder that the rest of us, the mince pie being finished, and coffee alone left to discuss, leaned back and let these two have their round at "Do You Remembering."

"You'll be remembering the annual fair," suggested Mr. W., "the Mop or Hiring Fair as we used to call it, where servants, farm or domestic, were engaged on the nod."

Nameless One: "Yes, and such engagement was binding to the next Michelmas Fair as any legal document could make it so."

"It was a fine old place and the college buildings were a great set off at the edge of the town. Of course you know

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that the main college building was the old Castle Inn, well-known when the London to Bath coaches were in existence, and many a Court Beauty stayed there."

For that one sentence, the London to Bath coaches and the mention of certain Court Beauties, I could forgive them utterly, their neglect of the rest of us, who wanted so hard to remember but couldn't, their utter absorption in each other and indifference to turkey, mince pie, and all the minor "fixings."

For to think of old coaching days and ways, of the grand important dames and their lovely young daughters, of stately beaux and gay young dandies is to me to be transported into another world. The very mention of these times is enough to put me into good humor for a week, and, if you'll be knowing me and the "den" you'll remember certain coaching scenes and a book or two, that'll carry you into their dear fairyland in half a trice.

If life has always seemed as good to you as it has to me, that you have wished you might have lived through a dozen of these "times"—still being the you you are to-day, but having the delight of all such experiences—you will grasp my gratitude to the man who makes me forget present "hard times."

But these two men's "do you remembering" has set me far afield myself. With no one to call up old associations I find myself wandering back to the dear stone city where I was born, re-visiting in memory the locust tree just in the corner of the garden, where half the old trunk stood as a monument to the tree that was, and where if you digged in the earth, you could often turn up stray coppers and "five centses" you had buried there yourself and forgotten, but which gave it the comprehensive cognomen of the "treasure trunk."

A little girl in a soiled lawn "pinny" you stray off to the pansy garden "out front," where the "big bed" held a hundred strange, thoughtful little faces, that if you looked

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into them were for all the world like people you knew—saucy faces, sad ones, "grandmotherly" ones dearest of all—the tall slender ones with the clarety-purple cheeks and soft tender eyes, like hers, dear heart—ah me!

And then the dusk coming on, a round of the block, a swing on the church fence chains, where, if you were in luck, a policeman chased you off, a look in on your dearest chum—a staid medical practitioner now—and then the last delightful act of a dear careless day, a visit to the tuck shop at the corner, Tanner's, where inside of the dustiest shady windows, were such scrumptious sticky bull's-eyes, peppermints, (though I liked them least of all), gum drops, peg-tops, and "new potatoes," to say nothing of chocolate brooms, mice, men, and All Day Suckers.

It mattered not that here, too, could be purchased cheese and baking powder, scented soap and blacking, tea, and your pet abomination, rice; also such hasty needs as a tin of "the best red salmon" should company arrive unexpectedly. The dark and dingy place of common huckstering and Tanner's, have little or no association in your mind—Tanner's is just Tanner's, a shop where you stood on a soap-box and took half an hour to buy a lollipop.

Does any one in Edmonton remember? And if you do not you can, you must, hark back to some corner store—funny, isn't it, what magic lies in the very name, and whenever did a shop in a block or down street reflect one half its glories?—where you disposed, in the days of your youth, of the much-prized black coppers, a kind providence sent your way.

Meantime our dinner is over and in a semi-daze I hear the voice of Mr. Woolford assuring the N.O.:—"Well, I never—it IS curious how one meets some one unexpectedly who knows one's old home, and I am right down pleased to meet you and hope soon to have another chat on the same subject. (If they do they'd better take a week off and do the thing up properly.) By the way, when did you leave there?"

N.O. (a bit gingerly, a woman being present): "Let me see—thirty-three years ago."

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Mr. W.: "That's curious. I left thirty-four."

N.O.: "And here you are a prosperous farmer in far-off Alberta—well, continued good luck and good-bye—and here's hoping we'll meet soon again."

But, as I walked home, after the repeated assurances from two men at least, that they had had a fine dinner, the three words "Do You Remember" dogged my footsteps.

How much do they mean to us all? How often has the magic of them kept a husband straight, and a woman steadfast?

"Do you remember, dear," says Mary, as John starts out for a bang-up dinner, "how contented and deliriously happy we were when we had just our own two hands to make our future with"—tremulously—"how you used to kiss me and say that so long as you had me nothing else mattered?"

"Do you remember," recalls the father's old friend of the wayward son, "what a fine, straight gentleman your father was, sir?"

And how many romances have borne their fruit in middle age with that "Do you remember" between old school day chums.

"Do you remember?" we query each other—can one forget?

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On the City Outskirts

IF OVER the sea lies Spain, over the brow of the hill in Edmonton, down on the banks of the river and along the flats, lies a country equally unknown to me. Here it is that the coal camps pitch their tents, the men who haul the sand and gravel erect their homes, and here I found myself one day not long since, a flitter-by in a carriage, barely touching, barely getting a look in at this new phase of life in this wonderful little city of ours—but keenly, vitally interested in what I saw.

I have boasted that I knew the Edmonton of the past two years intimately from A to Z. I take it all back. If I know one half the alphabet I am further advanced than I now imagine.

Jasper Avenue, the life that finds its home in the pink tea circuit of men and women who do all the conventional things in the old conventional ways—of this you can tell me nothing

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—in this round my daily life revolves, but of those other people whose every hour of life is more or less a struggle for bare living, who go out in the morning and chop frozen gravel, or delve down into the bowels of the earth where is no sunlight nor any bright or radiant thing—of such an existence I have no more conception than the babe unborn.

Oh, but I mean to! One peep at a thing has never satisfied me yet. I intend to learn what life means to the man who lives just over the hill. I want to know his joys, his hardships, his aims and ambitions.

It was with no idea of all this that I stowed myself away in the rig to drive to Clover Bar the other day. I was only going to an oyster supper, an oyster supper where there were to be any number of speeches and I was to see some very good friends. And as the horses plunged along through the entirely new district to me of Norwood, I was thinking of anything in the world but the problems of how a certain lot of men and women should live, or what relation they had to me and my life.

The first thing that attracted my attention was the little group of stores in close proximity to Norwood school. Quaint country-like places of trade where there were any number of farmers' wagons hitched out in front, and inside you could purchase anything from a violin to a roast of beef. Such busy centres; such evidences of bustle, and prosperity and quick and profitable sales!

Then I commenced to notice the children.

Little girls in coats too long for them, with ripples in the back, one remembered as smartly fashionable now long ago. Small boys, some of them in "longs," making them look like so many dwarfs. A motley collection, with the merriest faces and brightest cheeks you could hope to find.

And then we were out among their homes, in the midst of another Edmonton, where life apparently throbs with quite as rapid a heart-beat as in the fashionable west end homes in the centre of the Capital, and where, I am free to confess, I saw far more to interest me.

Now I might spend a month of Sundays among correct

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folk and their luxurious environment and never send a speculative glance the way of either them or their pressed brick mansions. Beautifully curtained windows and pompous prosperous householders amuse me not at all. I know pretty much to a certainty the various incidents that make up the day behind the Swiss net and stiff lace draperies.

The probable late breakfast with its appetizing bacon or eggs; Pater Familias helped into his great coat and speeded citywards with a kiss or a complaint as so my lady's fickle fancy ordains. The usual round of happy household duties; luncheon, calls, dinner parties or the cheery gatherings round hospitable grate fires: I speak of the happiest phases of an ordinary prosperous man and woman's day.

In any or all of these incidents imagination has no need to play a part. But when you come to the modest shacks probably put together by His own hands; when you see a woman scurrying across a break in the fence to borrow her next door neighbor's daily paper, which is probably again passed on to Mrs. Smith; when you have a glimpse through an uncurtained window of lone bachelors frying their solitary rasher of bacon, or seated beside the table, reading by the subdued glow of the little lamp that has to answer for the entire lighting of the house; when you see outside, hanging on the side of the shack, half the paraphernalia of the kitchen; then speculation runs riot. Here you come close to something real, something that tantalizes you into wanting to know more; you begin to realize that there are other things in life than back-biting your dearest friends. It comes to you that existence is after all a solemn thing.

Now, while a window full of flowering plants may arouse a momentary interest on Fifth street, a tin can with a little sprig of green, in a house on the Flats, takes captive all my curiosity.

Fifth street may buy its flowers, carelessly, as a small adjunct to the general beauty of the room. They may be a gift, carefully tended because of the giver, but that bright little can with its slip of geranium, that wooden box with its bed of tender green parsley—who knows for

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what its touch of modest beauty and freshness and growing life stands in the general scheme of things for the miner, the hardworking drawer of coal, or his wife and family?

Perhaps in that little shoot of green the young English wife sees far-away England; perhaps in the simple operation of watching and tending it, down-cast hearts may keep their faith and courage, one can not know, but for myself I never passed a window on that long and eventful drive and saw within one such small effort to introduce a ray of brightness, but that my heart beat quicker time and back at once I telepathed "thank the good Lord for every man and woman, who, however humble, reaches out in life to place a bit of hopeful green in the window."

Leaving the tents and houses in the rear and cutting down the slope to the river, we came upon such a lively panorama as would astonish anyone unacquainted with winter conditions on the Saskatchewan.

Teams everywhere — horses' heads touching the carts in front, apparently an unending stream of them, but with a small break, there they were again. Loads of coal and loads of gravel, loads of gravel and carts of coal; for all the world like a long circus procession.

And where there weren't carts there were men; men with picks chopping gravel, thawed out by the aid of little fires built on the ice, others loading the waiting teams—a scene of never-ending activity.

My visit to Clover Bar was an eye opener in more than one particular; and for any experience that brings with it a little more of sympathy, of kindliness and knowledge of my fellow man, I am, as I hope I ever shall be, sincerely and truly grateful.

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The Question of the Hour

NE of my correspondents writes to know what I "would suggest as a Christmas gift for her husband, who is a man of most peculiar tastes." With which incidental hint his casual wife, who has lived with the dear man for probably a score of years or more, leaves me—I am evidently supposed to do the rest.

On the face of it the task doesn't look so appalling, for after all, are not all men "peculiar" and if one knows one of them well, why not the sex as a whole; still a few particulars under the circumstances would have been appreciated.

You see the dear man may be only reasonably peculiar, such as having a marked antipathy to his better half's spending thirty dollars on a gift for him, when he hasn't thirty cents to advance her on it—a rooted objection to a lot of fussy things for his chiffonier, when what he affects are plain solidly-good appointments, noisy ties when he prefers the quietest tones, the standard authors about whom "she" raves, when all he wants is a book that will make him smile. Most men can find all the tragedy and heavy reading they fancy at the office—and thus the various "dear girls" all over the country come in time to apologetically explaining to a friend here and a friend there that "George" and "Harry" are "the nicest boys" but just a trifle "peculiar." And George and Harry retaliate in kind and apologise to Jones for Mary's funny little fads and antipathies, such as smoke, wine, solid discussion, etc., etc., and the world becomes made up, as time goes by, of "curiouser and curiouser" people.

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But seriously do you blame George or Mary for having these little ideas of their own as to what they prefer? Wouldn't they be the deadliest kind of bores if they hadn't just this touch of something different to arouse your interest.

I was talking to a man not long since about Dickens. (Between ourselves I am quite mad on the subject). I had expatiated at great length on his marvellous insight into human nature, when I happened to glance at my vis a vis.

"Why, of course, you appreciate him too," I ventured.

"No," said this blunt male person, "I don't, I'm sick of him. You see my wife"—I saw. Unlike Oliver he desired no more.

I really believe it's the cramming method one objects to more than the thing itself though. I know in my own case that the mere sight of an encyclopedia is sufficient to provoke me to the point of making a scene; all as a result of a steady diet of dry facts from breakfast on.

For this most "peculiar" man then what do I suggest? Verily not a volume of Browning which he is very apt to leave in lonely state on the front parlor table; not an impossibly gorgeous smoking jacket, not fine brasses and artistic what-nots—but, if he is a man who has a hankering for a well-written book concerning animal life, one of the many much-discussed and oft-attacked yarns that the very wise Thompson-Seton's and Kipling's and Roosevelt's, etc., are turning out in distracting numbers. If he doesn't believe one word that the book says, it gives "him" something to argue about anyway. If he can't rise to animal lore, get him one of the smart toast books that are flooding the market, at any rate something you know he fancies, not something YOU fancy he ought to fancy. Of course it's wonderfully gratifying to have a husband whose tastes are correct, and who qualifies to the terms artistic, and "awfully particular," still—I think that as a real Christmas surprise I'd give the "dearest boy" one of the peculiar things his soul covets—always of course keeping a weather eye on whether you can reasonably afford it.

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The Christmas Entertainment

HEN the first of December comes round each year, I have a thrill that dates back to the first year I went to boarding school. It is the spirit of the Christmas holidays that haunts me how long a time after.

How many stalwart young sons and homesick little daughters' hearts are made glad with the dawning of that day, only the person who has "been there" can possibly realize. You have torn off the last page of your calendar and can now mark off the time in days.

Heavens! the joy of seeing each square blotted out and home and father and mother and the whole precious family so very, very near! Then comes the excitement of the Christmas concert when "you" speak your piece, fearfully and wonderfully gotten up in your best bib and tucker, starched out of sight, and with enough ribbons to start a notion counter. "Oh, but you just know you'll break down." Yes and dear old mother here all the way from Cherry Hill with a world of love and pride in her eyes, and her heart in her mouth for fear the crowd will make you nervous. You take a peek at this juncture out of the hole in the curtain, which has acquired a very respectable size by reason of countless peeks and pokes from other "piece" sayers for twenty years back, and there you see the dearest face on earth anxiously watching for the curtain to rise and the concert to begin.

At this stage Hilda Jones nearly pushes you over the footlights trying to identify your "perfectly sweet" brother. So you leave her and go over into a corner

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just to see if you really can say your lines to yourself.

"Above the pines the moon was slowly drifting
The river sang below;
The dim Sierras—
The dim Sierras
The dim Sierras

The saints to the rescue—you knew it—that you didn't know it! In frantic plight you grab the nearest girl and make her "hold the book" to prompt.

Just then you hear your name being spoken. A plump gentleman, one of the directors of the college, being even now announcing "We will now have a recitation by Mary Jones of Cherry Hill, entitled 'Dickens in Camp.' "

Pushed by your dearest friend you advance in a wild state of frozen ignorance. With a dip of a bow, your eyes fixed stonily on the audience, in a trembly shaky voice you begin.

How still everything has become!

Isn't that man in the corner looking rather curiously at your head? You feel hastily for your spreading ribbon bows—and finding them alright, are vaguely composed by the knowledge, and then you look at mother—for the first time—and looking, think of Cherry Hill and the press notice they will give you. Made stout of heart, you begin to introduce sundry gestures, the audience has ceased to look terrifying and you are able to be natural. Presently it is all over; with a thunder of applause you retire, flustered with glory and the next girl goes forward to her purgatory.

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You have now time to go into ecstacies over your bouquets, to slip down to a seat by mother and enjoy the trio who are blazing away at a concerto and pressing very hard on the loud pedal.

Concert over, amid a shower of kisses and "do writes" and banging of trunks you are off to Cherry Hill—going home for the holidays.

The Cherry Hill papers note your arrival, and everyone makes a fuss over you—oh, oh, oh, you whisper to yourself as you creep into your own little bed—was there ever a luckier girl in the world than I—and isn't Christmas just the very scrumptiousest time ever?

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Canada and Britain.

"Daughter am I in my mother's house
But mistress in my own."

I SUPPOSE that a new country, like a new baby, must patiently submit to a great deal of discussion as to its various characteristics, what the influence of its parentage upon it is and how far it shows evidences of striking out on an original course. It is the price that it has to pay for the very fact that it is new. In its earliest years it does not mind, being for the most part blissfully unconscious of the attention that is given it. But when, with development, it begins to look forward to the time when it will put away childish things and take its place in the affairs of the world, many of the observations that come in its direction are hardly calculated to put it in a good humor with the kindly disposed people who are responsible for them. It finds itself criticized and advised by those who know the youthful personage they seek to guide so slightly that their interference can only serve to irritate.

This is the stage at which Canada has now arrived. For a long while the people of the Old Land gave little thought to us. To many of her statesmen we were a burden that Britain should get rid of at the earliest opportunity. One prime minister spoke of us as a millstone about the British taxpayer's neck.

All that, of course, has now changed. Hardly a week passes by but we hear of some distinguished Britisher coming out to the Dominion for the purpose of sizing up conditions here. What they have to say when they return home we read

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with interest, but in very few cases do we find that their observations are of much value to anyone concerned.

It would be a matter of great surprise if they were. How can a man who rushes from ocean to ocean and back again in five or six weeks form a proper judgment of the people he has come out to study?

What I have been saying in this general way has been for the most part prompted by an article which I came across recently by a man of considerable prominence in the literary and newspaper world of the Old Country, Mr. Harold Begbie, who last year made a flying trip across the continent and has since been giving his impressions as to our destiny. He is very sorry to have to say that Canada "is setting her gaze in the dangerous direction of political and commercial contrivance and no longer feels that enthusiasm for a common kinship is the natural path of union. She no longer places her faith in British tradition."

"I met," Mr. Begbie continues, "with no little impatience concerning the life and spirit of the Mother country. The sentiment exists that we are swollen with fatness, that our hands grow heavy with the rod of empire, that our feet lag in the march of nations. Mark well these detractors express no disloyalty. They look for mothering to no other country. The British will serve their purpose till they are a nation of sixty or seventy millions, when they will take care of themselves.

"Because Canada has learned to distrust Great Britain she has ceased to follow the path of British tradition. She no longer admires the Englishman. She admires the Canadian. She no longer feels enthusiasm for the ancient ideals of the race. She is no longer controlled by the old spirit of the British people. She is conscious of an individual destiny, and would make her own way in the world. Her one concern is to grow speedily rich and great, and everything gives place to this over-mastering appetite. There are judges in Canada who cannot be trusted. There are politicians whose infamy is in everybody's mouth. The American terms 'boodle' and 'graft' have crossed the border

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and are found to fit Canadian action. The nation laughs, and goes on its way. Wealth is the goal, power is the end. 'We are a young people,' they say; 'we keep our politicians as an organ-grinder keeps his monkey, for amusement.' And they go on grinding out a music which is not divine.

"The foreigner who settles in Canada never becomes a loyal Briton. He never considers the proud course of English history, the noble growth of English law, the consecrated obligations of English tradition. He has no kinship with Britain. He would be more at home in Yorkshire or Sussex than he would be in Turkey or China. What he has of loyalty he gives to the Dominion, and he grows in that loyalty as completely a stranger to the kinship of the British race as the German-American or the French-Canadian. There is a continual stream of such men pouring into Canada. They and their children never become British. They become Canadians.

"I found that the best British-Canadians, and Heaven be praised these stout-hearted men are still a multitude, deplored this materializing spirit in their country. They told me that the Scandanavian is welcomed to Canada as warmly as the Englishman, that the one and only object of the country is to develop its resources quickly. They spoke to me frankly of the shameful judges and the crooked politicians in Canada. They confessed that because of their English loyalty they are the objects of suspicion and criticism.

"How far we may strengthen the hands of the loyal British in Canada remains to be suggested. For the present this is certain and beyond dispute, enthusiasm for British character and British traditions—that great bond of unity—is no longer the sovran inspiration in the life of the Dominion. Canada—composed of many nations—means to be a country of her own. She is carving her own fortunes. She is making her own traditions. And these traditions are not at all the traditions of the British."

Mr. Begbie, I think, is open to criticism on two grounds. He has been misled as to his facts and the deductions which he makes are not those which should appeal to reasonable

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men and women. What he says of our judges and our public men is a libel on the country which every good Canadian will resent. British law and order have never been more consistently upheld than in Canada. There is no record, that I know of, to show where any charge made against the probity of a Canadian judge has ever been substantiated. If Mr. Begbie wishes to know how thoroughly we have discharged our duty of upholding this, the most precious of British traditions, he should study the history of the development of the Canadian West and compare it with that of the Western States. We all know how in the early days of the latter the law of the mob and the shot gun prevailed. There was no such thing in most of the communities, removed long distances from the centres of population, as the proper administration of justice. In our country, on the other hand, with every movement of population towards new territory, the government has been alive to its responsibilities. There were but a handful of people in what now constitutes Alberta and Saskatchewan when the Royal North West Mounted Police were established and the record which these riders of the plains have made, along with those who co-operated with them in a civil capacity, may well fill every Canadian and every Britisher with pride. We have had no such outrages at any period in our history as those which for so long a time were the principal events in the history of the western States. No matter into what part of Canadian territory a settler goes, whether he makes his home where population is the densest or takes up an occupation within the Arctic circle, as a miner at Dawson City or a whaler at Herschell Island, he will find the protection of the law. Before Mr. Begbie undertook to slander us as he has done, he should have made an effort to learn something of us. We do not claim that our politicians are all men of high honor, who are working without selfish motives and with the public interest solely in view. It would be strange, particularly in a new country, if they were. But this we can say with certainty that of few of the men who have guided our political destinies in the past have we any reason

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to be ashamed and that each year the general standards of public life are getting better. Partizans are too frequently given to making unjust charges against their opponents. Mr. Begbie has heard some of these and has jumped at conclusions, which are in no way warranted.

As to the enthusiasm for the ancient ideals of the race, which Mr. Begbie thinks we lack, I think what I have just stated goes to disprove his assertions to a large extent. The ideal of the British race that we should be proudest of is that of even-handed justice. The jingo doesn't often dwell upon it but it is that which has made the British race what it is. The present Lord Chancellor of Great Britain in an address he made not long ago said he was never prouder of being a British subject than when acting some years since as one of the counsel in the Venezuela arbitration. A native was giving testimony as to the boundary line between British and Venezuelan territory. When asked what led him to say that it had always, so far as his memory went back, been fixed at a certain place, he replied: "My people always knew when we were being persecuted that when we passed that line and were in British territory, we were safe."

I maintain that having in Canada carried out this ideal, we have not altogether failed in our trust.

As to the other particulars, in which Mr. Begbie found us wanting, I think he is disposed to be unreasonable. We have a great new country to build up and we are anxious to draw our citizenship from the best blood of all nations. It is surely not to be expected that the Canadian, who is the product of all this, will find himself altogether at home in Yorkshire or Sussex. The Englishman, whether of to-day or of many centuries past, would not feel at home in that particular part of Europe from which his Anglo-Saxon forefathers set out for the shores of Britain. Yet the word "Anglo-Saxon" has always been one to conjure with. It has been the crowning glory of the British that it has been able to assimilate so many different peoples, gaining from each elements of strength but maintaining through the whole process the original characteristics of the race. This is what

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we expect to do in Canada. We do not expect nor wish to have Canadians slavish imitators of the people of Great Britain. The character of our vast domain and of all the influences which go to make us a nation must necessarily be impressed upon us. But with all due respect to Mr. Begbie, we do admire the little island across the sea, both in its present and in the past, and we have a real feeling of loyalty towards it and towards its Sovereign, which is also our Sovereign. The rapidity with which new-comers among our citizens from other than British countries enter into these feelings of ours is a matter for wonder. In another part of this volume I have pointed out how heartily the children, drawn seemingly from all parts of the earth, enter into the spirit of our patriotic celebrations. The King's Birthday is still and always has been our great holiday. The fervor with which we celebrate it is nothing like equalled in the Old Land. So big a place does it hold that it quite over-shadows the First of July, the birthday of the Dominion, greatly to the disturbance of the peace of mind of those who think that proper attention is not given to the development of a purely national spirit.

Mr. Begbie has altogether misread Canadians. If there were not something distinctive about us, we could not be the source of strength to the Empire that we hope to become. He speaks of our willingness to receive protection from the Old Land in the meanwhile, but is certain that our intention is to go our own way after we reach a certain stage of development. I can see nothing in the trend of public opinion to justify this conclusion. Talk of independence or of annexation to the neighboring republic receives no encouragement. There is so little suggestion of severing the Imperial tie that it is not worth consideration. We are bound to develop the characteristics of a Canadian nation. It will, however, be a nation within an Empire, working out what are purely its own affairs in accordance with its own ideas, but acting in the affairs of the world at large as a part of a world-wide British Sovereignty.

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The Men Who Make Good

Rise up in the morning, with the will that, smooth or rough,
You'll grin.
Sink to sleep at midnight, and although you're feeling tough,
Yet grin.
There's nothing gained by whining, and you're not that kind of stuff,
You're a fighter from away back, and you won't take a rebuff;
You're trouble is that you don't know when you have had enough—
Don't give in.

—R. W. Service.

IT is three years since I first knew the West—the West, and the quiet open prairies, and the bustling, dominant life of its lusty young cities. A land of mighty possibilities, where the people on the soil grow to have a wonderful confidence in it, as a friend that will be good to you, if you are good to it. A land of great wide spaces; and the race of men are strong and sober.

This is the real West, the West where to do and dare, to struggle and strive means to attain and make good.

It is one of the big mistakes to paint this land as a region where fickle fortune reigns and sugar plums grow on the bushes. These newest provinces of the Dominion are not the places where No-Goods and Failures flourish and the man of no endeavor succeeds, but, they are the true West, the best West, and when you know it well, you will realize that it holds the hope and the future of the race.

And because I know and love this land, where a man has

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only to hang up his hat to find a home; because I know the responsiveness of the soil, the character of the main body of the people who are working out its great destiny, I am moved to a natural indignation when I turn over the English and foreign papers to see it traduced.

During August, T. P. gave a couple of his rarely fascinating weekly pages to the chroniclings of "Four Men in Canada," three failures and one success. I read the letters with a great deal of interest.

I know the race of The Four, as we see them from the colonial standpoint, rather better than most.

The intelligent English farmer who comes to us with a wide knowledge of the work he is to undertake, to adapt his home experience to the different conditions of a new country. The mechanic with no future in his own land, who has the pluck to stick to it out here, until he grows to love the soil, and fortune smiles on honest endeavor. The remittance man, whose home people and their cheques are his ruination. The staminaless squealer who spends his time relating how they do things in England and damning Canada because no brass band comes out to greet him. The Englishman waiting for something to turn up, lazy, insouicant, a charming companion but a quitter when it comes to work. The man who takes up his time in writing letters home. And those other sober, industrious sons of a bull-dog sire who are the backbone of this newest Empire, as they have been of every other newly colonized land of modern times.

I know them all. Many of them we rate as "some of the best of us," while others are the curse of the country. They are the Willy Joneses who can't run home from school fast enough to tell their maters what a horrid bad boy that Bobby Dunn is, and the first to inform, and misinform, the teacher, as to some other fellow's pranks.

Papers, it would seem to me, would do well to investigate Willy and his story fairly thoroughly before allowing him to break in to print. Tattle Tales and Whiners generally, do not run strongly to truth. If in Canada, and in the West in particular, Willy Jones does receive bad treatment, is he

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so cribbed, cabined, and confined that he can't pull stakes and move on to another grub-pile! But no, he must write home and worry mother as to the terrible privations he is enduring, He must hit up father for another advance. As though a streak of poor luck was a peculiar growth of Canadian soil, and he the worst used fellow under Heaven.

I have often wondered if some of the parents of these lads could see them, as I have seen them, holding up the rotunda and bars of various hotels, rushing around tenth-

"Pater imagines me roping steers."

rate actresses and generally acting up to the cane-sucking, blase, good-for-nothing theatrical type of Englishman, if they would put such store by Willy's letters. "Supposed to be out on a rawnch," Billy confides to you, "but my word, I couldn't stand a week of it. Chucked it the second day."

"Pater imagines me roping steers or broncho-busting at present. But nothing of that nature for little Willy. Prefer to do that stunt in town."

Last summer while staying in Vancouver in the rotunda of the C.P.R. hotel, I ran across a well-connected chap from the Old Country, whom I had known very well in Edmonton.

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"Staying here?" I inquired.

"Oh, no," he replied, "haven't got the price. Waiting for the Pater to send on a cheque."

"And what then?" I asked.

"Same old thing, I guess. I'll wait until something happens along."

As if things were ever known, in any land, to do just that.

The man, thirty odd years old, is a great muscular fellow, yet that afternoon I saw him go driving with a party of wealthy girls, and let them pay his cab fare.

A would-be high-flyer, said I to myself—but in reality nothing but a miserable little flapper.

The other side is a brighter story. Jolly good fellows, delicately reared, setting up shop for themselves, making good all about you—and these are the stuff that show us what Nelsons, and Raleighs, and Livingstones were made of.

As I have said, if information bureaus do masquerade under false pretences, expose them; but in the first place exercise a little judgment in seeking a proper source of knowledge.

There are gold brick artists every where, but it is in most cases one's own stupidity if they unload their wares on you. Be sensible and practical; investigate first and not afterwards and there will be fewer stories of take-in's.

Leaving aside the story of the man who succeeded—because, made of the stuff he was, he would succeed anywhere, let us now consider the failures. One instance will suffice:

"A rector's son was captured by one of the usual "Farm Pupil" advertisements, which promised to give instruction to young men in farming, and steady employment afterwards, for the payment of a small premium. The instruction given is very practical, and includes cleaning out pig sties, manure spreading, spade work, milking, and such-like. The food and lodging are bad, and the farm pupils are "treated like dogs." This kind of life proved impossible for the tenderly-reared youth in question, who was quite

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unused to manual labor and roughing it, so he quickly broke down and had to leave, forfeiting his £50 premium and also his wages, which the farmer refused to pay, as "he had broken his engagement." Such cases as this are of frequent occurrence in Canada, and should make parents very cautious in committing their sons to the care of unaccredited strangers on the strength of mere advertisements."

While having every sympathy for this tenderly-reared youth, I would just question, what did he expect? To spend his time attending pink teas, lectures on the beauties of landscape gardening, and seeing other men milk the cows for his benefit?

When, oh when, will all this misunderstanding end, and men realize that the law of the entire West is the law and the cry of the Yukon.

"I wait for the men who will win me—and I will not be won
in a day;
And I will not be won by weaklings, subtile, suave and mild,
But by men with the heart of Vikings, and the simple faith
of a child.

. . . . .

This is the Law of the Yukon, that only the strong shall
thrive;
That surely the weak shall perish, and only the Fit survive."

This is a new country, and many trails have yet to be blazed. We want pioneers, men who don't know when they're beaten. And to get the men we want, we say "here are one hundred and sixty acres, a free gift, take them and make a home."

And the right men set to their task soberly, with stout hearts, and in time I see a snug farm house, many cattle and great wheat fields, all, all the gift of this wonderful new Dominion. While the other set of men are loafing about town, demanding "where are the brass beds and the parlor rockers?"

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I think if the rectors' sons stayed with the church it might be as well. And yet it was a churchman, Phillips Brooks, who wrote: "Oh do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of our work shall be no miracle. But you shall be a miracle."

We want such miracles out West to-day.

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A Western Salon

WITHIN a stone's throw of three of the principal banks of the city, up a short flight of stairs, on Saturday nights, if you are of the elect, you may find an evening of Bohemian enjoyment, where a merry round-up of doctors, lawyers, lonely Englishmen, and other strays, foregather about the interesting personality of the hostess.

If you are in luck you may have been asked to dinner, in which case you have had all the fun of puzzling out how it was possible to have concocted such a well-cooked repast amid such tiny quarters. If the tender birds you have just finished to help punish were roasted on the premises you ask yourself, whither has floated the inevitable roasting aroma? These green peas, the new potatoes in their white blanket sauce, the delicious clotted cream and peaches, where under the low-hung ceiling, were they prepared, when you know there is but one stove and that, a heater, in the cosy rooms, until your reverie is interrupted by the presiding genius of the feast asking you to please pass your cream plate back for a banana, as there are only a certain number of plates available, and they are all in commission.

If you are a new-comer to the flat and are curious, you may later solve the dinner puzzle. The solution is Song Lee's little Chinese restaurant around the corner, whence emerges a Celestial boy and a capacious basket.

The black coffee of course presents no difficulties, a cooking heater is, after all, one of the comforts of life.

Over the fragrant brew, tastier and more enjoyable because you actually witness its preparation, conversation is

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sure to be pregnant with a delicious intimacy and good-fellowship. In no place does so-called Society meet the Lonelies on such familiar terms as when seated on an operating table in a doctor's Bohemia, or stretched on the cosy corner which serves as a bed at night, in one of these jolly little flats. The broadest minds of the one stretch out in a community of interests to the other, and such an evening of common enjoyment follows, as seems impossible where a drawing-room and the usual formal conditions prevail.

You may be a judge of the Supreme Court, or you may be a "younger son" at work on a railway construction camp, if you are doing your part in the up-building of the country, and are a gentleman by instinct or breeding, it is all one in this western salon. It is "please help carry the cups out to the dining-room-pantry-kitchen," and "See who's at the 'phone."

There is no set method of entertaining in Western Bohemia. Those who talk well naturally do their turn, but everyone finds something to say or do.

You couldn't crowd a piano into the rooms if you had the price to buy one; but a good gramaphone fits in well in the corner of the bed room.

Across the hall it isn't hard to imagine that you are in a London music-hall, and that Harry Lauder is actually before you, rendering his inimitable songs instead of a great black bell substitute, which is vibrating to his echo.

Half the men present have heard and seen the world-famous divas whose songs at this Out-Post of Empire are even now ringing forth in the dusky little bedroom, but the songs are none the less enjoyable if the chords of memory do tug a bit at the heart strings, recalling the dear dead days that are now seemingly passed away for ever.

But how the singing of them carries one back, and how certain songs and people associate themselves in our minds, even as a flower, a perfume, or a book are on the instant suggestive of some particular entity, which at one time or another made a more or less deep impression on one's life.

"I Want no Star in Heaven to Guide me." The man over in the corner of the room has closed his eyes, forgetful of

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everything save the girl "back home" who once sang it to him.

"Here a Sheer Hulk Lies Poor Tom Bowling," calls up to another a boy in a mining camp, since dead, who used to sing it, to quote his pal, "like the very devil." And so we listen and whisper, until lights are turned up to allow of our glancing over some English papers just in. The English papers! How many "mother's sons" of old Britain, all over the world, daily stand up and call them blessed. The home papers! Here's to them.

"I see there's a new opera on," says the wandering descendant of an old Irish peerage. "My word, but I'd give a five pound note to be there."

The Lineal Descendant is at present engaged helping build a cement pier on the bridge, and earns his five pounds very much by the sweat of his brow, but no matter.

"Hooroo!" exclaims another, "Ranji's chalked up another century."

Just over the little desk, hangs an old steel engraving of General Sir ——— by ———, "my paternal uncle," the hostess informs you, as she sees you regarding it. But all about the room are speaking evidences of the notability of the family in their ancestral home.

Perhaps sometimes the bright-eyed little Queen of the Salon look back a bit regretfully, if so her guests are never permitted to know it. As Dr. Pringle, the Yukon agitator has it, "for pluck and daring the Englishmen up North have us all beaten hands down." And yet how much better than being the mere descendant of a brave man to have a hand in the fight yourself. If blood tells, then blood shouldn't cool; heirs of all the ages, is it fitting that we sit by with idle hands?

"Clay lies still, but blood's a rover
Breath's a ware that will not keep.
Up, lad, when the journey's over
There'll be time enough to sleep."

As we say good-night we grasp the hand of the small woman, with a firm and sympathetic grip. Say what you will of us, it's what a man is, not what he's been, that still counts out West.

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The Mary Jane Problem

MARY JANE is a public institution. In Edmonton she is also a vexed and vexing problem.

It is inevitable that in a country as new as the West the Mary Janes of many lands should flock, and flocking, form an interesting chapter in the history of the life of the state. Because of this I am moved to write my experiences of "Mary, as I have found her," leaving other Mary Janes in distant parts, but with eyes turned Westwards to draw a moral, which may perhaps be of use to them when they themselves strike out to make their fortunes in the Promised Land.

"The old-time Mary Jane who used to spend a life-time in one family, helping to rear the babies, beloved by all, has passed away," is a common saying now the world over. Out West, except in very rare instances, she has never existed. The "new issue," of which our grand-mothers speak so contemptuously, has arisen to take her place, until she is no longer the "new issue," but the general type that prevails commonly—the Mary Jane with her problem, a problem

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which is not the least of the many confronting us in Western Canada to-day.

She is a big problem because we are a busy people; a people too engrossed in multitudinous duties to very often be able to do our own domestic work. She is a very vexed and vexing proposition because she mostly misunderstands us, this partly no doubt because she is for the most part a stranger in a strange land, but also because she comes to us with the most extravagantly ridiculous notions as to what is her rightful due, our unparalleled and unlimited incomes, and lastly our supposed ignorance as to how things should be done. Because some misguided creatures have assured her that she'll be snapped up by an eligible young homesteader in marriage before she has time to say Jack Robinson, and because, fatal error, she has a half-contempt as to what need be done for a mistress in the wild and woolly West.

Who is responsible for the misunderstanding I don't pretend to know; but the general idea seems to prevail that in these newer provinces, gold blows about the streets in place of dust; just as at one time other deluded mortals, on hearing that Johannesberg was paved with the waste from the gold fields, in which a small proportion of free gold still remained, rushed thither, firmly believing the city was literally paved with the precious metal.

In the case of ignorant foreigners one can forgive these Arabian Night's dreams, but for ordinary individuals to cherish such remarkable ideas strikes one as just a bit ridiculous.

Because it is a country I am describing so great and wonderful in its possibilities, that it can afford to have the plain and honest truth

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of it fairly delivered to you, I may here venture to remark that the day of the hold-up in domestic and other service, like the reign of the cow-boy, and the imperial sway of the One and Only Company, has passed away forever. Good wages are always available for good service, much, very much in advance of what could be obtained in the old lands, but "we're from Missouri," to use a slang phrase, when it comes to being held up for preposterous wages for crude and inadequate service.

In so far as I have reason to believe that the present book is destined to travel rather widely over-seas, where Western conditions are not begun to be appreciated, I may be forgiven for dwelling at some length on this point. Now we all know that there is a general impression abroad that out West the formalities are entirely dispensed with, and that the inhabitants live, so to speak, very close to nature—which is entirely and utterly absurd so far as the towns and cities are concerned. Intending immigrants of course who propose to homestead or go beyond the railway limits can live, needless to remark, pretty much as they please; but Western cities are as much in the know and a good deal more up-to-date in most respects, than the very much older and closely-settled eastern communities. What people seem to lose sight of, is the fact that the population of the majority of Western towns is composed of the best young blood of the most highly civilized lands on the face of the globe; and not of men and women who have been living practically cut off from their kind for generations.

To-day the swarthy fur-trader of the north is as much a curiosity in Edmonton as the menagerie in a circus. To be sure he drops in on us once in a twelve-month, when he brings down his yearly catch of furs, but his coming is an event, and the going of him like the folding up of an Arab's tent.

From all of which you may gather that domestic service in a city such as Edmonton is required to be, to be able to command high wages, of as proficient a class as in any part of the world. On the other hand very few families employ

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any but a general or two domestics, a cook and housemaid. There is a small field for lady companions and capable housekeepers—but it is a limited one. It wouldn't be, if lady companions generally remembered their places; but as things are, they are generally considered more bother than they are worth.

The great mistake that most girls make in coming to Western Canada is in starting out by demanding exorbitant wages.

In the Old Country they are told that Canadians are easy, with the result that they don't imagine we know the value of money. Strange to the country and new to our ways, they ask us, who will have to do a great deal of training, to start them on wages, say fifteen dollars a month, for absolutely crude service. As a matter of fact fifteen dollars a month, or £3 in English money, is considered a very fair remuneration for competent help.

In England the girl who asks fifteen here, would probably command, so English women inform me, six or seven dollars and have to work harder.

While the general wage—earning capacity of business men is undoubtedly very much greater out West than in the older communities, so in a great measure in proportion, are living expenses higher, and so in like respect can we not afford to pay for domestic help at a fabulous rate. House rent for modern dwellings is a big item, fruit and vegetables are dear proportionately, also a great many of the necessities of life. Taking her board and lodging into account then, Mary Jane comes high at any price in these new communities, and entering into service she should remember this.

In three years out west I have known Mary Jane in five languages: Cynthy, a half-breed; Mary, the Galician; Florence, who owns to calling Germany home; Jeanne, from la belle France, and Victoria from England.

As regards one of them the story is soon told. Mary Jane wasn't cleanly, though she had a fixed predilection for dressin' up. Mary Jane was extravagant but a good cook. Mary Jane commanded eighteen dollars as a monthly

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remuneration, but had to be chased almost hourly to ensure our being given an even half-chance to be healthy. Plainly there was nothing to do but release her.

In her place came Mary The Second. Candor compels me to here confess that Number Two was not exorbitant in her demands, six dollars to start in on and her entire training.

For two weeks we stood each other, Mary "pongerskering" and "paroskying" and "Missus" pointing at dishes and repeating monotonously "plate, Mary;" "jug, Mary."

Then there were lessons on how to address strangers at the door and so forth. The Master of the House being called into requisition to ring the bell, the while "Missus" attended her to the door. The plan seemed feasible, but "sit down!" shouted at a guest in lieu of the more customary, "Won't you be seated," didn't take well with the people one didn't know, and as, by this time, the innocent (?) child had taken very naturally to walking out with men she just picked up on the street—an English custom I have heard tell—one joyful night I bade her an eternal farewell.

Followed my three other types who had one point in common: their demand for a high wage without the necessary qualifications to earn them. If one was a good cook, she couldn't keep the house decently liveable in; another just "lifted" things, without taking the trouble to conceal the fact. I have sat in fascinated wonderment while my Sunday-best cut-steel belt cavorted round the table clasped about the buxon waist of My Lady Slavey.

Another M. J. had an extremely aggravated case of desiring to attend church, every evening. At first I acquiesced, but even churches shouldn't keep a maid out until twelve-thirty and one of the morning. After all, one can't burn the candle at both ends, and the most good-natured mistress may be reasonably excused for not relishing having to rise at six a.m. to call her maid in time to get breakfast.

Again the lack of even the commonest courtesy between the maid and her employer is another cause of contention.

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I am not speaking of the exceptional girl who is a lady under every condition, but of those others, unhappily too numerous a class, who "talk back" on every occasion; announce their going out and coming in at their own sweet pleasure, use the drawing-room for their own friends the minute your back is turned, and are generally insubordinate and unruly. Dishes smashed galore and no mention made of the fact; luxuries appropriated without a "by your leave;" no real interest in the household which employs her, and a fixed idea to get the most she can, and give the least, would seem to be the fixed policy of a good half of the girls at present in service in the west.

Realizing that a goodly proportion of the Mary Janes are foreigners and that mistakes consequent on their different upbringing and environment are at first only natural, one still would raise the plea, that those who come out know the rudiments at least of domestic service, and that they be possessed of that saving grace of common sense and nice feeling, which can always retrieve a difficult situation.

The real remedy of course lies even back of Mary Jane, and is to be found in the teaching of domestic science in all the schools. As manual training is an essential necessity to almost every boy at some time in his life, so a grounding in the science of housekeeping is, should be, one of the most important subjects in every school the world over.

Out West a great cry has gone up for competent Mary Jane's; in the country John and Henry are equally in demand; —but until they show their mettle would it not be well for John and Mary to be modest, to remember that fortunes are not made in a day even in so promising a land as Canada West, and for our governments to get busy and make manual training and domestic science compulsory studies in the schools.

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Miss "Oh, Really"

H, REALLY" was no more her name than it is yours or mine, but it really should have been. And now she is really married, after no end of preliminary skirmishes, the "life sentence" having been pronounced amid a profusion of palms, fearfully and wonderfully gotten up friends, and no end of bridal choruses and the similar paraphernalia of a smart society wedding.

I read it all in one of the Eastern papers and then while sipping my after dinner coffee, had it out with the "Man Who Knew."

"I see that Ethel ended up with an Englishman," I began, I always thought her "Oh really!" (distinct upward inflection) would some day bring her a somewhat similar reward.

No encouragement from "The Man Who Knew," so I tried another tack.

"I notice that in the description of the guests and gowns, her mother (such a nice woman as she was!) figures most inconspicuously at the end of the list. The man raised his eyes and surveyed me steadily.

"Of course," said I, "I never doubted that that was where her daughter would eventually put her, because—Oh, really, it wouldn't do, don't you know, to offend anyone else."

Gazing at the little forest of asparagus fern in the centre of the table, I lost the man at the other side and saw for the time being only the girl who had gone to college with me, the bride of yesterday, who I made no doubt of it, made a

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brave showing in her "exquisite gown of white chiffon and rare Maltese lace, the groom's bridal gift of costly jewels at her throat, and sparkling in her beautifully dressed coiffure."

What lovely auburn hair the girl had had, and how radiant she was in even her simple school girl garb!

Again for a moment I forgot the stately bride to remember the deadly-dull and uninteresting student.

Back crowded all the girls I had known and loved and hated, and farthest back of all was the face of the leading lady in yesterday's drama.

Why she had ever come to college was a mystery—and why doting parents had literally robbed themselves that she might make a fine appearance was a dual one. If she had had any lovingness, if she had been possessed of one spark of gratitude or wit, or brains, or shown evidence of being other than a superlatively self-composed, matrimonially ambitious doll, brimming over with affectation and insincerities, one could have understood it; but to every remark to have to put up with her "Oh really" for every sacrifice to receive in return only the vacant acceptance of this empty-headed bit of humanity—oh this blind parent love, what tragedies are committed in its name!

Well, the girl is married. Launched on the world, with a relative or two of some social importance to act as sponsors —by hook or crook she has annexed enough smart frills and furbelows to make a "respectable" appearance.

For four seasons she has angled and during that time has caught more than one fish. Some she broke the hearts of and threw back into life's troubled waters, others had their revenge and slipped off her line, still others grew bored with her "oh, really"s—small blame to them—and in the meantime her beauty matured and along came the fool, who, in the words of Kipling, the immortal:

> "Made his prayer,
> To a rag and a bone and a hank of hair."'

And, presto! "Oh Really"' has come into her own.

Through the intervening veil of fern The Man has been

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watching me with an amused smile for the space in which I have been "looking backward."

"I wonder," he now interjects, "where it will all end?" How long Philip Augustus will take to feel

> "The sting like a white hot-brand
> The coming to know that she never knew why
> Seeing at last she could NEVER know why
> And never could understand."

"Really," I reply, "I couldn't venture to guess, maybe he's an "Oh Really" bore himself, in which case HE will never know why; maybe he knew what he was doing; most probably he will know how to console himself."

But "Oh Really," I wish I could draw a picture of the tall girl at the altar, be-decked in her bridal finery; of her little pitiful mother, tucked in the far back-ground of the dim church; in such a manner, that you could see, as I do, the terrible, significance attached to this "life sentence!"

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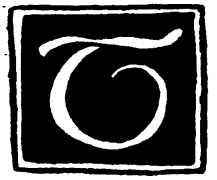
The Coming Westerners.



HE flotsam and jetsam of the earth" you think and say, as you wander through some of the streets in the north and east ends, and pig-tailed children tread on your toes in a wild endeavor to reach "home" in a game of "hide and seek."

But two generations later the "flotsam and jetsam" will have changed its name and become the substantial men and women of the greater Edmonton that is to be. It is this thought, even more than the charm of the rollicking children themselves that has moved me, in the present book, to write of them.

I remember talking not long since to an Irishman on the subject of home-making in this part of the Dominion.

"You know," said he, "much and all as you and I may love it, we shall never look on the West as home. With us there will always be the thought of "going back," because the country caught us too old. But our children! that's a different story. Here they will be born and raised, here the young immigrants will gather their childish memories, amid these surroundings, and with the snap and vim and youth of this land, growth of their growth, will spring up a vigorous young citizenship to whom it will be 'home' indeed."

There you have, in a nutshell, the fascination of watching the evolution of the flotsam.

Where to-day you and I are kept busy explaining just what part of Canada or what land we hail from, to-morrow these children will have simplified the operation, the com-

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prehensive term of being a plain Western Canadian having turned the trick.

And again, with the memories of no old sorrows, no persecutions, new blood in a new land, with a great broad outlook and its future still to carve, the present-day childhood of the West starts out on the journey of life. Here, at home, in this land, lies their opportunity. The potentiality of such a citizenship, such a land!

Back east, in foreign parts, I, my immigrant neighbor, dreamed our dreams of the future of our children.

Perhaps in the way of his forefathers I saw visions of a great career for the wee lad who was to be my hostage to fortune. He might be a judge, some day—he might be a famous medical practitioner.

And the little French woman up the street, the German haus-frau around the corner—did they not to see visions, and build in similar fashion their Castles in Spain?

The petit Philippe—such a smart garcon! was it not possible that one day he would be the proprietor of a big shop in one of the smart thoroughfares. The wee Wilhelm—who knows, so wise as he is! some day perhaps—wise German professors were little boys once.

Ah! but in Canada West there is no limit to the "May Be." "Might Have Been" is a sad phrase—"May be" is an open road that leads to the end of the world.

Cecil Rhodes! You think of the sickly boy who went to South Africa—may-be to die there. Cecil Rhodes! you remember as the greatest man of his time, because he struck out for a land where there were the makings of a great empire, awaiting only the right hands to mould it.

What Cecil Rhodes might have been in England is problematical—what he became in South Africa, a land of possibilities, the whole civilized world is aware of.

And so when I gaze around at the faces of sturdy young Westerners, I look beyond the pig-tailed braids, beneath the ragged caps, and on them all I see the word Possibility writ in letters unmistakable.

In the West an ambitious boy might be anything.

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It was said of Cecil Rhodes that, a true Englishman and an ardent lover of his native land, he was yet, and above all, an Africander.

When I see in the foreign quarter be-shawled Russian women, filing out of their chapel, neat white aprons half-covering their Sunday-best costumes, I say to myself, Russians first—Canadians afterwards. But when I look around me on the streets and behold the hocus-pocus of many lands, developing into the type of child that Canada has made familiar to me—I say Canadians, First, last—and always.

Years ago, a young parson of the Toynbee Hall pattern, lent me a book, Whiteing's No. 5 John Street.

I was fairly young at the time, a girl in my teens, but the story of No. 5 and Tilda, the fighting flower girl, took possession of me then, and has never left me.

You could write the story of the street, in the heart of the west-end slums of London, in a brief sentence. Tilda summed it up in "O, why didn't yer ketch me when I was a kid?" and gave it further point when, just prior to her heroic death she uttered these words: "We can't do no good with ourselves now. We wants pickin' all to pieces, and if you begin that you'll only tear the stuff. Give the young uns a chance in their cradles, an' let the old uns die off; then you'll see a change."

The wise philosophy of this slum child! "You've got to ketch them when they're kids."

When Mr. Mays, President of the National Editorial Association of the United States, was in Edmonton, with the members of that organization this summer, he accused Mayor McDougall of double tracking him about the town, averring that at every second street his Worship would pause and say, "That's one of our schools," pointing at an immense up-to-date structure, and a few minutes later—"that's another of them."

But what Mr. Mays didn't realize was that the West has determined to "ketch" her future citizens "when they're

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kids." And the way she proposes to do it is through the schools.

Not long ago I attended, as a member of the Westward Ho! Chapter of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire, the presentation of a flag to the Alexander Taylor school, whose register includes perhaps more foreign names on its list than that of any other institution in Edmonton. My impressions on that occasion may be of some interest at this time. After referring to the quaint tots I had met en route to our destination, the report went on:

Before us (the presentation took place without doors) marched three hundred and fifty children, two by two, in a long impressive file; hand clasped in hand, and garbed in such a variety of out-fits as might have been the product of every country under heaven. I saw a child in a black velvet, gold-embroidered fez cap; I saw another in his father's old fedora; one little girl might have been dressed for the ballet, and wore a brass chain belt. There was a stolid little German boy, and right behind him a lad of color. I couldn't take my eyes off them. Before us marched Canada West, an Empire composed of many nations, who were desined to make this vast and practically untilled country, a garden that would literally blossom like the rose. It was a sight never to be forgotten.

A distinguished officer and a well-known educationalist then addressed these young Canadians on the loyalty and duty they owed the flag that made Canada a haven of refuge to them, a country that threw open its arms to take them in, and through its schools and other advantages, make splendid citizens out of them. Who can doubt the impression created on these young minds, by the fine-looking soldier in his trig regimentals, and the modest man, who, having given it its name, in a sense, typified the fine and well-loved school before them.

The earnest little faces, the wonder of them, as speech followed speech, is with me yet. I could have gathered them

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up in my arms and loved them one and all, and when the dear old flag was raised and fluttered out to the breeze, and these hundreds of cheery childish trebles rose in a great chorus of "God Save the King," I found that not a few of us were wiping our eyes. If the wise King who lives over the water could have seen the faces that invoked countless blessings on his unknown head, I think that he, too, would not have been ashamed to weep.

Before closing I must tell you of just one thing, the glance we had at the primary room.

Those of us who learned our A, B, C's parrot fashion, and who now see how charming the pastime of acquiring knowledge can be made, have, I think, a right to raise one jolly kick for not having been born in the present generation. When, I ask you, had we fascinating Peter rabbits drawn for us all round the board? Fat-tummied bunnies you wanted to poke they looked so "real?" When did "action men" prance about doing all sorts of queer little stunts as they did, as I saw with my own eyes, around this school room? When did we make strings of roses and butterflies and hang them in garlands around our musty old class rooms, transforming them into a veritable fairy-land?

If to-day, many of us are lacking in appreciation of the beautiful things in life and are too much engrossed in mundane affairs, may it not be that we never had the chance to be otherwise? "La-da-da, da, da, da,da," the manner in which we learnt our lessons in those "rare, old, fair, old golden days, when things were not, like now, at all;" may not this account for it? "We love our dear old Alexander Taylor School," sang the children as we entered their class rooms. Well they might, and when we left them we carried away as a happy souvenir, a pot of Easter lillies done in tissue paper in wonderful fashion by childish fingers. On the back of mine, which I treasure, I see a little foreign name scrawled. I wonder will this child of many advantages carry home with him, the beauty and artistic appreciation of these schoolhood days. I pin my faith to him.

Part of Colonel Belcher's admirable address I append

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It was a model of carefully and comprehensively chosen words, that like Lord Rosebery's speech on a somewhat similar occasion, was spoken of as "child-like but not childish."

"This flag which is being presented to-day to the school is, and always has been, wherever it waves, the emblem of civilization and progress; and education and progress go side by side; And I trust that whenever the young scholars look up and see the old flag waving, they will remember that they are a part of the Great British Empire on whose flag the sun never sets."

Who doubts but that raised amid such scenes, and in such a land, Young Canada will come into its own,—will realize the May-Be, we are all of us hoping for?

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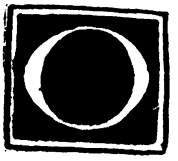
The Gateway of Opportunity.

Hail, men! Upon my roughly paven streets
I feel the pressure of your eager feet,
The firmly planted feet of marching men
Turn westward to the wheatlands and the trail.
Hail! sons of England from the ancient isles
Hail! men of Ireland's rainy purple coast.
Hail! Yankee, ranchman, miner from the hills.
Hail! weary peasant shrinking from the knout.
Hail, men from East or West howe'er you come,
Bent beneath loads and knotted with long toil,
Or young and clear-eyed with out-stretching hands,
I give you welcome from my golden gates
I give you welcome—welcome unto toil
And freedom, and the illimitable sky.

—Sarah H. Birchall.



N the afternoon of the 31st of August, 1908, at three-thirty o'clock, there might have been seen lolling up behind an Indian file barricade at the Land Office door, a solitary figure of a man, his attitude suggestive of a long wait ahead, but his eyes shining with the light of a victory won, and a great hope and happiness in store.

The man's name was Murdoch, the first in line of order for filing a homestead on the odd sections of land placed by the Dominion Government at the disposal of the public.

Not since the early 70's, and then only in the case of Manitoba, have the great army of home-seekers had a look-in, on any but the even-numbered sections of land in Alberta and Saskatchewan. The odd numbers, and the popularly-

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supposed-to-be lucky ones, were set aside awaiting the good pleasure and selection of the railroads. And the railroads dawdled in quite their wonted way when, it is to their selfish advantage to do so, until one day the Government began to rub its eyes and take notice, with the result that a few weeks since advertisements commenced to appear in all the leading papers, setting forth that on September 1st, 1908, such odd numbered sections as remained after Their Highnesses, the railroads, had made their choice, would be available for homesteading purposes.

Murdoch's presence inside the railing at three-thirty on the afternoon previous to the day on which entry could be made is answer enough to those wise ones who loudly proclaim that all the near-in and best land had been taken up years ago. A man doesn't spend eighteen hours in an erect position in the open on a cold damp night for nothing.

And it was cold and damp and generally disagreeable. In the afternoon there had been just showers enough to give the air that moist, depressing sensation that one is accustomed to associate with rheumatism and all the "itises" that thrive to chasten man on his earthly journey. Around the Land Office, where in bright sunny weather there is always a shady coolness due to the over-hanging trees and bushes, the dampness seemed intensified. But from the hour when the first applicant took up his position, man after man slipped in to swell the waiting line, until by evening eighty men inside the barricade and a small army around about, bespoke the faith in the land which seems to be the language of the entire West to-day.

It is the language of hope, and confidence in the soil, of faith in the future, and resolution to work in the present. On an occasion such as this, when there gather together so many men of many minds and nationalities, the home builders and history-makers to be, I love to wander in their immediate vicinity to hear the reflections that arise not only regarding the new country they have come to, but to make myself acquainted with the ingenuous opinions of these soon-to-be scattered countrymen.

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It is an inexpressible pleasure to know a little of the world, and when I say the world I mean that part of it that is represented by the body of the common people. Politicians I may learn of from the newspapers, and all those other interesting and distinguished personages one classes among the men who have arrived break into print and "impressions" so frequently, one is at no loss to discover what conclusions they have arrived at, from metaphysics to their preference for a mutton chop over a dish of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding.

The common people's thoughts on the other hand are hard to get at, and the politician who can size up what John Jones honestly thinks of him and his ways is somewhat of a genius.

Reporters and political schemers at a distance, however, John and all the other Joneses speak their minds in no mistakable fashion, and so I found as I loitered past the barricade at eight o'clock to look over the crowd.

Under the pretense of deciphering a small notice up over the door, which stated that any person desirous of filing a homestead must take his place in line and get a ticket, I listened to the comments about me.

"What in the Sam Hill are you going to do here all night?" queried one man of the First in Line. "Roost, like the chickens," came quick the retort.

"And where might you be from, Stranger?" spoke up a man a few feet off. "Bruce, of course," was the prompt rejoinder. "Bruce first, and Bruce forever," he added with a twinkle in his eye.

Next to him, and seated on the step was a French priest, his long soutane sweeping the damp boards. As I regarded him, he put a bottle to his lips, and slowly drained—a draught of milk.

By all the gods! I said to myself, the Private Secretary, the Rev. Mr. Spaulding, though in another dress.

As the thought came to me, he slowly un-

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earthed a bath bun from a basket, and here to the life was our old friend, his bottle of nourishment, his bath bun, and if you believe it, shod with the well remembered goloshes.

Whether that night there were any special spirit seances I have been unable to 'gather, but as I passed down the line I assumed that whatever happened, here before me was a sober majestically patient audience; a crowd of men to whom life meant a solemn down-rightly earnest existence. As I left them, by the cold light of the moon, I noticed they resembled nothing more than a long line of roosting turkeys, settling down for a one-legged rest under the branches.

In the morning from the Mounted Policeman on duty, I learned a few of the incidents of the evening.

There had been no disturbances. Each man had held a little soiree of his own until late in the night. No one had attempted to usurp his neighbor's place in line, or make any complaint regarding the discomfort of such close quarters. Hour by hour they stood, or perched on the railings, talking to city friends or discussing their picnic supper. Such of them as were entire strangers readily found others in the crowd who were eager to make their acquaintance, and so they chatted and chaffed the hours away.

One's thoughts went back to nights in the large cities, when Sir Henry Irving and other brilliant dramatic and operatic stars shone with so wonderful a light that they turned night into day, and men stood patiently hour after hour in line for the sake of securing a choice place of vantage from which to observe them.

And here was another crowd with no stars to dazzle them, but in their mind's eye a picture of a broad stretch of virgin prairie, a little shack with out-buildings that was to spell home to them, and away in the distance a vision of the day when by their enterprise and industry they would be big men in the country, the owners of broad acres of literal gold—the famous wheat fields of the West.

From the officer's story I gathered that no stray Maritime Harvesters had, by any chance, become mixed up in the waiting line. It was a typical western aggregation, quiet,

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orderly, but infinitely good-natured. At such a time, when a "snack o' the bottle," as quaint Posty would have it, would be, if at any time, permissible, no man indulged over-much, which rather takes the starch out of the yarn that when a Westerner goes East it is customary on saying good-night to him, to place a black bottle beside his bed, and on departing bid him have pleasant dreams, and, indicating the spirits, make himself comfortable.

But for all that there was no rowdyism, the man on duty and certain visible signs inside the fence had interesting tales to tell.

Among as motley a collection of beer bottles, hampers,

"A little shack that was to spell home to them."

coon coats, "turkeys" (the packs men carry who travel afoot, generally done up in a huge bandana) might be seen such interesting objects as an ornate wicker chair, some super-fine travelling rugs, and other articles that bespoke far-seeing individuals in not too straitened circumstances.

The chair, I learned, was held down by an ease-loving lawyer, who, true to his code of seizing every advantage, had had the foresight to arrange with a friend to relieve him during the wee sma' hours. A few others had made similar arrangements and put in the night in shifts.

In the morning as I passed up the ranks, by this time augmented up into the hundreds, I noticed a woman well

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up amongst the first fifteen. She wasn't there last night, that I knew. Here was a story of Western gallantry that deserved to go down into history. These men, immigrants a great many of them, selfishly interested all, had stood aside and allowed a woman late in arriving, precedence over them. Ah! but I should have a good story out of it.

Just at this moment happened along a friend, The Man Who Knew. Being an old hand at the game I should have remembered that true to custom He always does happen along just about this time, but I was too keen to get my facts.

Yes, he could tell me all about her. She was from the Old Country, had a large family of little ones, and her husband was dangerously ill in one of the hospitals here. "Plucky little woman!" he added, "and you bet here's where Western gallantry shows up big!"

It sounded almost too good—and so I determined on a personal interview. Some of the men had tried it and been turned down—but I was a woman, and being such, doesn't always spell disadvantage.

Better take another sight on the nationality question, I said to myself, and so proceeded.

"I'm afraid you'll be rather tired before your turn comes," I ventured. "It sometimes takes a long time to look up these records. What State do you come from?"

"Why, how on earth did you know I WAS an American," queried the woman whose voice assured me my stray shot had gone home.

"Because I don't believe a woman of any other nationality would have the pluck and enterprise to be where you are now," said I.

"Well! you're right, any way," she proceeded. "I'm from Chicago, State of Illinois."

And that was all. The interview seemed to be at an end.

But I was from up-to-date Edmonton, province of Alberta, and, moreover I knew a thing or two about women. We have our weaknesses, God bless us! and one of them is

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a notion that we like to put the lords of creation in the wrong.

"It's queer how often a Man Who Knows it All doesn't know anything," I ruminated half aloud, "now just now a man told me your entire history, and he said you hailed from the Old Country, had a sick husband and a large family of babes in arms."

Adorable contrary woman! how you rose to it!

"Shows all he knows about it then," she snapped. "I never saw the beat of men, anyway. Now, where did he get his information?"

"In the first place, as I have told you, and you had the sense to know (up one for me), I'm an American. If my husband is ill, I didn't know it. He's been dead for five years; I have one boy, fifteen years old, and I'm looking for a homestead for the two of us."

The rest was easy.

She knew all about farming; could plough with the best of them; had studied gardening and chicken raising, and loved both occupations. She and her boy would work the farm themselves; she had her eye on a likely spot, which friends had looked over for her. She was Thirteenth in line; wasn't superstitious. No one had yielded up his place for her, but a friend had stood in her stead during the night.

With a good-luck to each other we parted.

The Man Who Knew it All never knew, for he was lost in the crowd.

But now the waiting line became momentarily livelier, and chaff and tense excitement filled the air. Suddenly at the end of the file, stretched for half a block down Sixth street, the strains of "Auld Lang Syne," sung to a new version, floated out across the block.

"We're here, we're here
We're here, we're here,
We're here because we're here,"

rang out the words while the crowd laughed back its enjoyment of the humor of the thing.

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And then—almost without warning, the doors flew open and the first ten men filed in to register their homesteads. Simultaneously a Mounted Policeman could be seen stationed at the door and the Homestead Inspector, and the Dominion Land Agent came out to distribute the tickets.

"Line up; line up," ordered the officer on duty, as one by one the men signed and received their number.

Out of the first two hundred only two men, one per cent, were unable to sign their names, which speaks rather well for the class of settlers moving on to the odd sections.

No.'s 204 and 205 were English girls, Londoners, you could hear with their first words.

"What a dye! what a dye!" exclaimed one, "why, I've been 'ere since five this morning. Well, I 'ope it turns out right; seems like a great country, tho' you can 'heasy see it hisn't 'alf as hold as Hengland."

Blessings on her pretty cherry ribbons! if it were where would lie the hope of it?

* * *

In all my scribbling life I have never, save in one instance, that of poor misguided Cassie Chadwick, had the good fortune to run across any of my pen children in even the second stage of their existence.

With a smile or a sigh I have speeded them on their way out into the world, and how it fared with them in the afterwards the little bird never told me.

But a day after the rush for the oddly numbered sections, in a local paper I ran across the beginning of the second volume, of a romance I had hinted at.

I re-publish it just as it appeared:

"Married—On Tuesday, at Grace Methodist church, by Rev. A. S. Tuttle, Fred Reed, to Mrs. Margaret Conklin, widow, both of Illinois.

"Illinois papers please copy.

"On the above hangs a tale which may have in it a touch of romance. Mrs. Conklin was the woman who stood thirteenth in the line before the land titles office on Tuesday morning, waiting her turn to file a homestead application.

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She secured the north-west quarter of section 5, of township 59, range 3, west of the fifth. Immediately preceding her was Fred Reed, who located on the adjoining quarter. Shortly after the homesteads were located the services of Rev. Mr. Tuttle were required to tie the nuptial knots.

"Now the subject of a very interesting inquiry would be whether the pair had the matter all arranged before coming to the city, or whether the gallant Reed sort of 'sprung it on her' as they stood in the line. Perhaps the young man who so thoughtfully took Mrs. Conklin's place during the long hours of the night could throw some light on the matter. If so it might be in the interests of matrimonial science if he would come forward with his evidence."

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Before the Mirror

Glad, but not flushed with gladness,
Since joys go by;
Sad, but not bent with sadness,
Since sorrows die;
Deep in the gleaming glass
She sees all past things pass,
And all sweet life that was lie down and die.

There glowing ghosts of flowers
Draw down, draw nigh;
And wings of swift spent hours,
Take flight and fly
She sees by formless gleams
She hears across cold streams,
Dead months of many dreams that
Sing and sigh.

Face fallen and white throat lifted,
With sleepless eye
She sees old loves that drifted,
She knew not why.
Old loves and faded fears
Float down a stream that hears
The flowing of all men's tears beneath the sky.

—Swinburne.

N the cosy lounge leading into the dining room of the Vancouver Hotel are two wide mirrors framed in white, one of which bears the inscription:

"Life is a Mirror, try smiling at it."

and the other

"We are no other than a moving row
Of magic shadow-shapes that come and go."

Through the lounge pass daily the cream of the travelling public of that lovely coast city, to say nothing of the

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resident guests and their Vancouver friends who drop in for a social hour, and there it was, not in any search for copy, but because I loved the little passage from the first, I spent most of the idle moments I had during my short stay in the city.

The cosy lounging chairs of cool green willow, the softly-tinted walls, the framed pictures round about of old English hunting and coaching scenes, were in such admirable taste, that of themselves they could not have failed to attract; but best of all the quaint fancy of the two mirrors and their mottoes, appealed to me.

In both, the idea of life and we human, being a part of a rapidly passing show was, as you notice, broadly emphasized. Think of a mirror and you immediately conjure up a series of ephemeral reflections; think of life as a play, and before you pass a succession of shifting scenes and ever-changing faces.

Large hotels are sometimes spoken of as caravansaries, and I think it was some such thought, that of an hotel being say a one-night tenting ground for a motley throng of people, that suggested the appropriateness of these two looking glasses hung in the spot that they were. Being court polisher to a Mirror, I needn't name, you will be knowing I watched those two long and intently, hoping perhaps to gain some pointers on furbishing up the one for the Saturday News, interested at any rate in seeing what the looking-glasses would have to show, and this is something of what the twain reflected.

In the first place, despite the fact that most of the passers-by were holiday seekers, I saw that there was grave need of the admonition, "try smiling at life."

Of all the "moving row" who passed by to dine or on pleasure trips bent, not one in ten seemed to face the mirror with any very happy out-look. There were blase faces, cynical ones, faces reflecting impatience, discontent, harassment, anxiety, frivolity, and now and then, like a ray of sparkling sunshine, one smiling, happy one, and the old procession of non-smilers or simpering ones came on again.

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It was a sight to hold the attention and rivet the imagination. Next meal a fresh set of diners joined the throng, a happy face was missing and another in its place; but for the most part, if you had pompadoured some heads and smoothed down others, and given them a change of frocks or suits they were pretty much of a sameness.

But it wasn't only the faces that fascinated, but the combinations, that like a pack of cards, or a set o f chessmen, you could get out of the same pieces. I remember one gruff old party, and an extremely ugly, that is so far as features went, young girl who accompanied him. I had noticed them often in the dining room, he complaining generally and dictatorially ordering round the waiters, she quiet and soothing, apparently doing her best to pour oil on the troubled waters.

In a moment I had placed my chess men. He was a knight, not chivalrous and brave; but a gouty old rich man, venting his spleen on the world generally. She was a common little pawn, one of those extremely useful pieces, that followed in the wake of the knight, and did him good service, perhaps sacrificing her very life for him; but whether for love or money I hadn't ventured a guess. And one night as I sat in the corner of the room I loved, they passed very near me, and for the first time evidently, Sir Knight took note of the mirrors and growled out "What's that written on them?"

Like the tinkle of a deep-toned bell came quick the answer:

"Life is a mirror
Try smiling at it."

The words took on a new significance uttered by that ugly litte girl with the glorious, soft Southern voice. And again she spoke:

"WE are NO OTHER than a moving row
Of magic shadow-shapes that COME and GO."

The old party grunted, and if you had listened intently you might have caught something that sounded like "rot." But that evening he hobbled into the room when the crowd

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had sought a gayer scene, and I watched his face soften as he read again for himself the now familiar words.

"Life is a mirror"—ah well, some of us would as soon as not it weren't. My old man was evidently one of them. Such reflections as he had cast, of late years at least, hadn't helped the world along much, but there was the time before. I saw that he was back in the "Used-To-Be" and was happy with his thoughts. When finally his eyes turned to the other motto, resignation and expectancy were clearly mirrored. "Thanks be!" he seemed to say, "my turn will soon be over!"

Poor lonely old party!

Of course there were a great number of people who ignored both glasses entirely. You have seen them ignore life and its deeper significances in just the same fashion. The complacent ones you recognized by the sleek smiles with which they surveyed themselves.

"A primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him
And it was nothing more."

So the mirrors—merely looking-glasses in which they could see their own well-cherished and satisfying features.

Many silly, giddy, young girls fluttered by in peacock raiment, gay little moths who patted their bangs and smoothed their chiffons by the aid of their kindly reflection, and so had done with them. Life was a madness, an intoxication, a game of filching pleasure, never a mirror. Certain crabbed old gentlemen who were fussily engaged with their own importance glanced heavily at the glasses and snorted when they caught the drift of their message. "Bis boom-bah!" they seemed to explode, what have we to do with such nonsensical notions? I presume they were so taken up with grasping and salting down, that they hadn't time to remember they were human, what the meaning of life was, or bother themselves as to what impressions they left on it.

But the mirrors told kindly tales as well. Stories of life's sweet song, reflected by loving white-haired couples, who passed by arm in arm; fair young brides and mothers wrapped up in their loved ones.

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Oh, if life is a mirror and it be true that we are here and then away, isn't it worth while to try smiling at it—to make the brief tale and our entrance and exit, an Ellen Terry story of hard work and loving remembrance!

When I nodded good-bye to my friends of the green-room I had made up my mind.

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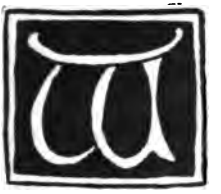
The Story-Book World

"I have heard of such a story book,
Such a very funny story book,
The common kind of story book
Where nothing's ever true."



HEN I laid down the "and they lived happily ever after" pretty romance, I found myself humming the catchy refrain of the story book song.

"The common kind of story book where nothing's ever true."

How much in little the words sum up! Life in a story book and life as you and I live it in Edmonton—there you have a far call.

In story books the heroine is always a girl with either a madonna profile or a face of exquisite beauty—this or a woman of captivating ugliness and an indescribable charm; while you and I, dear reader, are just ordinary every-day creatures, with probably sufficient good features or qualities to bar us from captivating ugliness, and yet insufficient loveliness to make us eligible in the professional beauty class. And so the Fates who preside over the destinies of the story book heroines pass us coldly by, and we are left to live out our little every-day lives of simple joys and fleeting sorrows, while the story book girl is the subject of a score of interesting adventures and fairly revels on the heights of joy or in the deeps of tragedy.

"It is not fair," one cries out. "Better be a Sleeping

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Beauty with the prospect of a Prince Charming awakening, than just a common-place mortal with a hundred vexations and cares, and no future, but such an one as your mother or aunts realized before you. Better, much better," you argue, "not to be all, than not to be a 'Once upon a Time' girl;" but deary me, I have grown a bit sceptical of the girl with the Madonna face, who marries the man with the "far-away look in his eyes" and lives happily ever after.

In real life, even in romantic life, people don't do that sort of thing.

Where the books would have us believe that the mere act of marrying is the consummation of existence, that it represents the end of temptation and trial, we who live in Every Day Land know it to be only the commencement, the beginning of the great game of Give and Take, of being steadily loving, forbearing, kind; of keeping a brave heart, of meeting in double harness the tedium of butcher's bills, business worries, household trials, the hocus-pocus of the jumble of Life.

Any mortal with a grain of sand can fight a sharp engagement, but it takes a man and woman of true heart and steady nerve to meet this every-day business of living with sweetness and dignity. So marriage is not the end—oh far, far from it—not the entrance to the "living happily ever after" scheme of things, only the gateway which you and Himself enter, each lovingly, to mutual helpfulness and the joy that comes through work and endeavor, through sorrow and joy.

In Story Book land, once married, hero and heroine are unflinchingly devoted ever after. Temptation no longer invades their Eden. But is it so? Are we not the same creatures of caprice and predilections we were before we swore, as honestly as may be, "to love, honor and obey," our various Dick's and Harry's.

If Harry proves a reed, unworthy of our love and respect, do we indeed "live happily ever after" and forswear thinking longingly of other lost ideals; and Dick who may have discovered of late that you were never his affinity—do his thoughts never wander?

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Oh, but it's a desperately serious business this act of mere living, and he of the "far-away" glances and, he of the classic features stand a jolly sure chance of a serious tumble into the world of Realities. It is not possible to forever wander hand in hand on the heights.

And yet the other day I had the privilege of reading a letter from an every-day happily-married woman to a recently-engaged girl. "You think, dear," she had written, "that you are happy now, and indeed I am sure you are; but as yet you have only peeped into a vast and undiscovered country. Forty years from now when you have weathered the storm and stress of life together, you and Himself will agree, I know, that you never knew what happiness was till you had experienced the clouds with the sunshine, and had learned through that mighty teacher, Experience, the infinite delight of being the all in all to one another."

The letter contained no mention you see of Arcadia but spoke of the joy that comes through meeting every-day trials with a "Happy Ever After" front.

At college I remember a girl who had a lover. I can see his photo now. Large, melancholy black eyes, the kind that stir your curiosity to discover what on earth they're sad about—(I don't think he knew himself).

Predestination writ large, from the pensive, sensitive mouth to an interesting droop of the shoulders.

How we one and all envied that girl, and begged for the privilege of a peep at him, the hero, when he came to call!

Poor G—— married him in the course of time, and the last I heard of him he was serving time for his failure to observe the law of "Mine and Thine." I can only think he should have never existed out of a romance, and that it was hardly fair to waste such dreamy, dark eyes on an every-day world.

Isn't it queer, come to think of it, the things we start out by meaning to have and the things in the long run we come round to accepting not only with fortitude, but with satisfaction.

One of our clever black and white artists did a series of

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pictures with this idea for a basis, I think. There was the debutante, with the ideal man of her dreams beside her—the same girl in her second and third and other succeeding seasons, with the accompanying men, gradually modified from a demigod into a very ordinary human being, labelled:

"And when she was 32 she went down the aisle with a man who looked like this." And "This" wasn't anything extraordinary.

There was once a man who kept his sisters on the jump by his fastidiousness. Was a collar a bit too low, George experienced the keenest impatience; did Mary keep him a moment waiting she had to explain herself.

And George—well George married a woman who affected wrappers, wore her hair in the prevailing mode of ten years back and at that compared her to his sister's detriment a dozen times a day.

A girl made for herself out of the fabric of her imagination a very wonderful man. Her Ideal.

One day she electrified her small world by announcing her engagement.

"Is he the Ideal Man?" everybody questioned.

"No," said this inconsequential maiden, "but he has my ideal nose."

Was she disappointed in her reality? Heavens! no. Ideal men and women flourish best in the picturesque environment of story books,

"In the Common kind of Story books,
Where nothing's ever true.
And things are too absurd
For folks to say or do."

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The Home-Makers

My home was in the Island that we love,
Set in the seas.
The heaven alternate smiles and frowns above;
The stately trees
Beset the hedgerows, and the fields are gay
With blossom store;
While still the gray sea washes, night and day,
The white-cliffed shore.

Sometimes my heart looks back, and yearning cries
To seek once more
The fragrant hedge-rows and the changing skies,
The lanes of yore.
And then the wide free prairie, stretched below
The high, blue dome,
Holds me with mighty arms, and whispers, "Lo!
I am thy home."

ONE of our favorite pastimes, back east, used to be, dinner over, and seated round the cheery grate fire, to hear from the lips of grand-parents or great aunts and uncles, of early pioneer days in Ontario.

My great grandfather had been a Major in the Royal Artillery, and was Inspector of Military Barracks and Ordnance, when such places as Toronto, London, Chatham, Amherstburg, and other points, were garrisoned with British troops, and my great aunts had scores of adventures to narrate of stirring incidents encountered while accompanying their father on his tours of inspection. Then the

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only means of travel were by stage and on horse back, and on these at that time long and perilous journeys through the forest, father and daughters came into intimate touch with pioneer life in Western Ontario.

As a little child the stories fascinated me. Glory be! must I forever live among conventional surroundings and give my whole attention to being a nice little girl with pretty manners, when these lucky aunts with prim little ripply curls, who sat so staidly erect and told of encounters with wolves, had had all the sport of living in days that sounded like a fairy book.

Oh! how I hated this being eternally dressed up, this regular going to school, no Indians, no wolves, no rides into spooky forests, no—no anything, that felt the weest bit story-bookish, or gave one the very smallest thrill.

Lucky old ladies, who proffered one peppermints and gum drops to assuage rebellious little girl's tears; unhappy small would-be-adventurers who protested against too effete a civilization!

Looking back on it all now, I can still appreciate the view-point of the Child I Used To Be. It is the call of the blood that has descended along with many other sturdy traits.

And yet in time the cry was stilled, and one learned to be very well content with the happy well-ordered life of the lovely, picturesque Ontario towns and cities.

Gradually, in the conventional round of careless merry school days, the after time of dances and theatres and love's young dream, of the exquisite enjoyment of early married life, the yearning to plunge into a wilder, freer life was forgotten, and through many golden days and joyous years, peaceful, contented Ontario seemed to represent the highest happiness a person need aspire to.

But all this time out West a little band of later pioneers were repeating on a broader scale the experiences of old-time Ontarions.

At first the intelligence aroused but fleeting interest. Of course there would be rovers, Esaus, whom the distant

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prospect would forever allure. They might as well strike West as elsewhere. In such manner did their going arouse but passing comment.

And then, like a thunder clap, came the realization, faint but assured, that out in that far-off stretch of land, vaguely spoken of as the West, a mighty movement was taking place. In the towns the faces of several daring young spirits commenced to be missed, the cities began to be drained of the young blood that has faith enough in a new land to move mountains. The peopling of the West had fairly begun. As little towns sprang up and railways pierced these boundless tracts, news came oftener of the tremendous opportunities awaiting all who cared to claim them, and the future of the last great West was no longer only a pipe dream of a few daring men, but was a fact that the whole world recognized.

"The Mountain's magic mad to-day," wrote Goethe of the Brocken, and in some such words may we not exclaim, the world is Western mad to-day.

From far-off persecuted Russia, from India, Germany, from the north and the south and the east, westward the star of empire makes its way. To-day this vast area contains one of the most marvellous mixtures of nationalities civilization has probably ever seen.

And how is it working out? Board the C.N.R. train at Winnipeg and come north to Edmonton; take the C.P.R. line and travel southward to your starting point. Go through the most infectiously bustling towns you have ever seen. Note the brand new buildings, the large hotels, see the class of immigrants who have taken up their homes in these wonderful new provinces; pay heed to the active, stirring life that is everywhere; that makes it impossible to dawdle or just put in time; look at the crowds around the real estate offices, see the loads of prospective settlers starting out for their future homes. And then go out and drive through a country where fences are not, where you will see the most boundless stretches of fertile land your mind has ever conceived, where you will encounter a new air and a new

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sky, the joy of living, hope, youth, your fairy tale come true.

Yesterday when I was in the midst of turning out the present article, a woman from Chicago dropped in to see me. She has been in the West a year, and formerly did sewing for me. Now she has just returned from putting in the six months of the year residence on her and her husband's homestead near Mannville, required by the homestead laws.

Here, I said to myself, is just what I have been wanting to interview—a delicate little woman, unused to hardships, who will tell me the truth about things.

"I suppose you're glad to get back to town?" I began. "Must have been rather uncomfortable in all that cold snap?"

"Well, do you know,we honestly didn't notice it," from this miniature five-footer. "You see we were busy and then the cold in Alberta is to my mind the cheeriest, kindliest sort of cold I've ever experienced. I just feel splendid." She looked it; for all the tiny, delicately-moulded figure. here was a woman full of the joy of living, happy, hopeful, in all the prospect of the future their quarter section was to bring them.

Bit by bit I learned the whole of her story. Last September they bought a team and laden with the most of the winter supplies, two tents, and with no live stock but nine chickens, they left Edmonton to drive to their homestead.

The journey out was perfectly delightful, the little woman assured me. In the day time they moved along fairly rapidly, and at night pitched a tent and built a small camp fire, where they had a good hot dinner and a cheery evening around the blazing fire.

In time their quarter section was reached, and operations begun to erect a small house and barn. The lumber for the house had been taken out with them, and soon she and her husband had a crude but cosy little home for themselves. The horses had then to be thought of, and with the aid of neighbors, logs were cut and hauled and in a short while a good, substantial log barn was reared, and my friends began to feel all the delight of landed proprietors.

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"If you had ever lived in Chicago and never owned a foot of ground, or even the nails in your home, you'd know something of how we felt over the possession of our homestead," went on this well satisfied new settler. "At night we used to sit and just grin at each other, as we discussed the prospects of soon purchasing a cow, more chickens, and sundry additions to our stock in trade. This year the neighbors kept us pretty well supplied with milk, and when they failed we used condensed or went without. We could always get fresh meat and with it and good substantial vegetables you can't starve, can you?"

"In spite of the cold the chickens kept steadily laying, so we had nice hot pancakes and other delicacies as well. I was rather surprised too, because we hadn't any windows to the chicken house, and had to leave the door open to let light in. However, I fed them well so I suppose that helped. When we came away I lent them to a neighbor and when we go back he has promised to return them plus half the chickens he raises in the meantime."

To the query that it must be rather lonesome at nights, this light-hearted homesteader only laughed.

"Lonesome! welll I guess not. We have splendid neighbors, and then we haven't time for the blues."

It appeared that when her household duties were over she sewed for near-by settlers, and thus added to their small supply of ready money.

Next year they will sow their first crop, when she expects to help seed and share all the other out-door labors. The prospect tickles her immensely.

"You may think I'm smart," she continued, "but you ought to know about some neighbors of ours."

"Mr. K—— and his four children; a girl twelve, two boys six and eight, and a five months old baby. They are French, the mother a dressmaker and the father a baker. Ready money being sorely needed, she left the homestead and went in to Vermilion to take in sewing. She is now clearing twenty dollars a week, the father runs the farm, and the little girl takes care of the children. Every Saturday

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the mother drives out and does the washing, such sewing as is needed, and tidies up generally, and when the father drives her back to town he does enough baking to last her through the week."

"And the baby?" I insinuated.

"Oh, it seems to thrive all right," my narrator assured me, "the father and daughter seem to manage beautifuly."

"It's funny," she went on, "the way the young bachelors around the country are chasing after widows for wives. You see a widow can claim her hundred and sixty acres on her own and children's account, so husband Number Two really gets the benefit of a half, instead of a quarter section."

This small dressmaker's story is only a sample of the universal satisfaction of every settler I have interviewed. If there are knockers in Alberta I haven't met them. In the eyes of every one of the farmers of the future, with whom I have come in contact, shines the dream of to-morrow's greatness. They see themselves part and parcel of the growth of a country that is astonishing the world.

Out on the prairies, face to face with their naked souls men and women come into possession of a depth of wisdom seemingly impossible to attain, surrounded by the distractions of the town.

And what after all is the secret of the spirit that apparently animates the whole West, from the centre of the newest cities to the uttermost end of the furthest distant homesteads, but the joy of labor, the satisfaction of knowing that in each man's hands lies the possibility of his own future?

"If a race is to continue virile, it must do its work," writes Mr. Joe Clark in Toronto Saturday Night. "It must be an all-round, fully-equipped race, not a caste. A people needs to have its roots in the soil. A percentage of the people of every generation require to come up from obscurity, gladdening in the sunlight of success, leaving poverty behind but carrying into high places the knowledge of it, and the lessons that it teaches.

"These men who come up from the lonely homesteads, from cottages and shops—the sons of workers "rise early

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and go forth with a comprehension of what life is, with a respect for learning, with an appreciation of opportunities, that those born to privilege cannot possess. These men often seem to have in them forces accumulated, hoarded unspent, through generations of hard work and simple living. These are the men who build transcontinental railways, found great manufactories, or give us epoch-making books, or energize religion. In them is a knowledge of the deeps; they are the sons of struggle; they know how they got whatever they have; they see what they have done, but know how little it is compared with what needs doing. They are the men who dare."

There you have it. In the East the element to dare is practicaly eliminated; out West its call arises on every hand. And so to the West have trekked daring men, purposeful men, men with an object in view.

Here is summed up the unrecognized something that impresses the most casual visitor, the spirit of enterprise I caught in my old aunt's long-ago stories of pioneer Ontario days, the pulse of the West to-day.

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